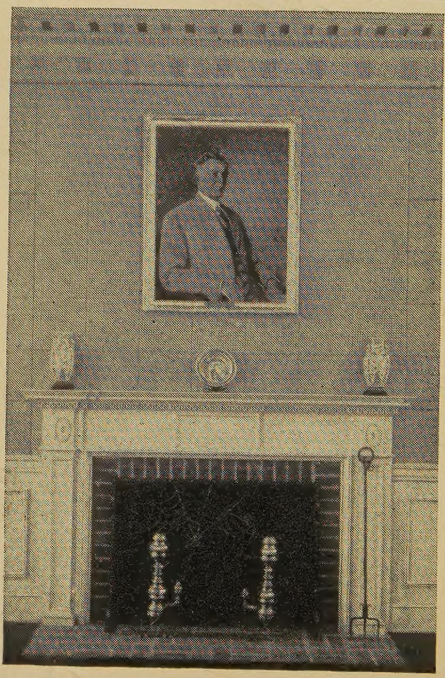

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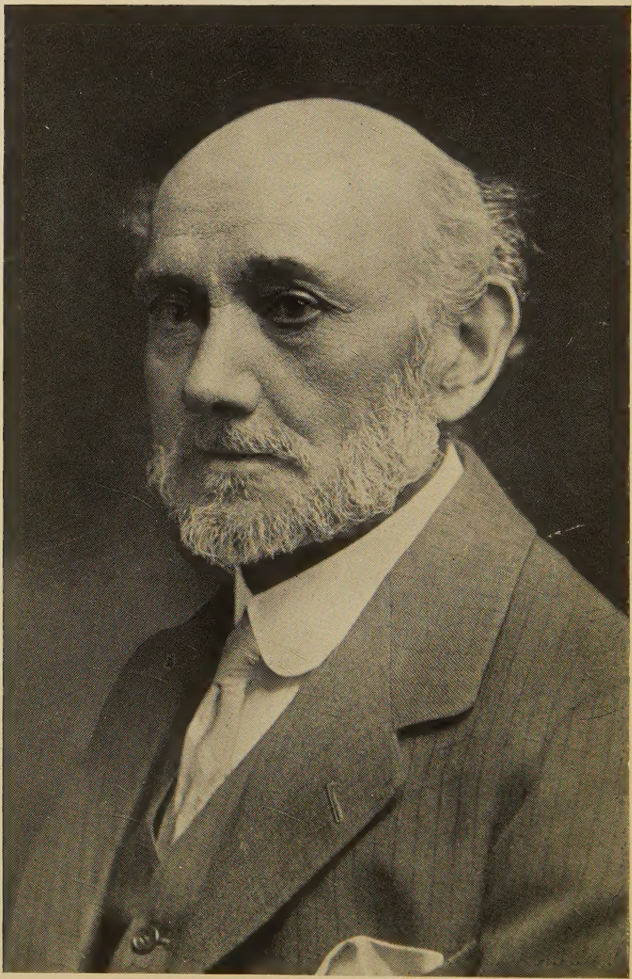
h. II.
These reasons vitiated because they were a mere plethora of objective facts. psychological factors being totally disregarded.

h. III
Wherein Germany's forecast of Russia's policy was mistaken.



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DR. E. J. DILLON

A SCRAP *of* PAPER

THE INNER HISTORY OF GERMAN DIPLOMACY AND HER SCHEME OF WORLD-WIDE CONQUEST

By

DR. E. J. DILLON

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INTRODUCTORY

"JUST for a word—neutrality, a word which in war-time had so often been disregarded—just for a scrap of paper Great Britain was going to make war." Such was the significant comment of the German Chancellor on Great Britain's determination to uphold the neutrality of Belgium. A scrap of paper! This phrase, applied to a binding treaty, is destined to stick like a Nessus' shirt to the memory of its author, his imperial inspirer, and their country until such time as the militarism which originated it has been consumed without residue. It is a Satanic sneer hurled with fell purpose into a world of civilized human beings. No such powerful dissolvent of organized society has been devised since men first began to aggregate. The primal source of the inner cohesive force which holds the elements of society together is faith in the plighted word. Destroy that and you have withdrawn the cement from the structure, which will forthwith crumble away. But this prospect does not dismay the Prussian. He is

ready to face and adjust it to his needs. He would substitute for this inner cohesion the outer pressure of militarism, which, like the hoops of a barrel, press together the staves. Brutal force, in the form of jackboot tyranny, then, is the amended formula of social life which is to be forced upon Europe and the world. Such, in brief, is the new social gospel of the Hohenzollerns, the last word of Teutonic culture.

This revolutionary doctrine, applied thus simply and undisguisedly to what normal peoples deem the sacredness of treaties, has awakened dormant British emotion to self-consciousness and let loose a storm of indignation here. It startled the quietism of the masses and their self-complacent leaders, whose comforting practice was to refuse to think evil of the Germans, however overwhelming the evidence. The windy folly of these *advocati diaboli*, from whom the bulk of the British nation derived their misconceptions of the German Empire, worked evils of which we have as yet witnessed only the beginning. Those who, like myself, know the country, its institutions, its language, literature, social life, and national strivings, and who continually warned their countrymen of what was coming, were put out of court as croaking prophets of the evil which we ourselves were charged with stirring up.

It is now clear to the dullest apprehension that the most dismal of those forecasts, the most sinister of those predictions, were terribly real, while the comforting assurances of the ever-ready publicists and politicians, who knew Germany only from books of travel, holiday excursions, or the after-dinner eloquence of members of Anglo-German Leagues, were but dangerous mirages which lulled the nation's misgivings to slumber. And now the masses have been ungently awakened. The simple declaration of a German statesman of repute, and a man, too, of the highest honesty as this term is understood in his own country, that the most solemn treaty, ratified and relied upon as stronger than fortresses bristling with cannon, is but a scrap of paper, unworthy the notice of an enterprising nation, suddenly drew into the light of Western civilization the new and subversive body of doctrine which the Teutons of Europe had for a generation been conspiring to establish, and would have succeeded in establishing were it not for a single hitch in the execution of their programme. If the combined efforts of peace-loving France, Russia, Great Britain, and Italy had moved the Tsar's Government to stay its hand and allow Servia to be mutilated, and the Bucharest Treaty to be flung aside as a worthless scrap of paper,

or if Austria had been permitted to listen to M. Sazonoff's request and reduce her demands within the compass of the possible, the realization of the Teutonic plot against non-German Europe would have been begun later on, under much more favourable auspices, and probably worked out to a successful issue. That plot belongs to a category of crimes against the human race which can hardly be more effectively attacked than by plainly stating its objects and the means relied upon to attain them.

The objects of Prussia's ambition—an ambition shared by every anæmic, bespectacled clerk and able-bodied tram-conductor in the Fatherland—are "cultural," and the means of achieving them are heavy guns, quick-firers, and millions of ruthless warriors. Real German culture in all its manifestations—scientific, artistic, philosophical, musical, commercial, and military—accepts and champions the new principle and the fresh ideas which are to regenerate the effete social organisms of to-day. According to the theory underlying this grandiose national enterprise, the forces of Christianity are spent. New ichor for the dry veins of decrepit Europe is stored up in German philosophy and poetry. Mediæval art has exhausted the traditional forms, but Teutonism is ready to furnish it with new

ones. Music is almost a creation of German genius. Commerce was stagnating in the ruts of old-world use and wont until German enterprise created new markets for it, and infused a new spirit into its trading community. Applied science owes more to German research and ingenuity than to the efforts of all the world besides. And the race thus highly gifted is deserving of a field worthy of its world-regenerating labours. At present it is cooped up in Central Europe with an absurdly small coast-line. Its surplus population has, for lack of colonies, to be dumped down on foreign shores, where it is lost for ever to the Fatherland. For this degrading position, which can no longer be tolerated, there is but one remedy : expansion. But to be effectual it must be expansion combined with Germanization. And the only means of accomplishing this end is for Germany to hack her way through the decrepit ethnic masses that obstruct her path and to impose her higher civilization on the natives. Poland was the first vile body on which this experiment was tried, and it has been found, and authoritatively announced, that the Slavs are but ethnic manure, useful to fertilize the seed-fields of Teutonic culture, but good for little else. The Latin races, too, are degenerates who live on memories and thrive on tolerance. Beef-eating Britons are the incarnation of base hypocrisy

and crass self-indulgence, and their Empire, like a hollow tree, still stands only because no storm has yet assailed it. To set youthful, healthy, idealistic Germany in the high places now occupied by those inert masses that once were progressive nations is but to adjust obsolete conditions to the pressing requirements of the present time—to execute the wise decrees of a just God. And in order to bring this task to a satisfactory issue, militarism must reign as the paramount power before culture can ascend the throne. Militarism is a necessity, and unreasoning obedience the condition of its success.

It is easy to think scorn of these arrogant pretensions and to turn away from them to what may seem more urgent and more profitable occupations. And hitherto this has been the attitude towards them of the advanced wing of British progressists, who imitated the Germans in this—that they judged of others' motives by their own. But the danger cannot be exorcized by contempt or indifference. The forces at the command of the Teuton are stupendous. His army is a numerous, homogeneous, and self-sacrificing nation. His weapons are the most deadly that applied science could invent and the most practised skill could fashion. And these weapons are handled not by amateur or unwilling soldiers, but by fanatics

as frenzied as the Moslems, who behold paradise and its houris athwart the grey smoke of the battlefield. For Teutonism is not merely a political system, it is also a religious cult, and its symbol of faith is Deutschland über Alles. Germany above everything, including human and divine laws.

One of the dogmas of this cult resembles that of the invisible Church, and lays it down that the members of this chosen race are far more numerous in the present, as indeed they also were in the past, than the untutored mind is apt to imagine. The greatest artists of mediæval Italy, whom an ignorant world regards as Italian, nay Christ himself, were Germans whose nationality has only just been discovered. That the Dutch, the Swiss, the Belgians, the Swedes and Norwegians, and the recalcitrant British are all sheep strayed from the Teutonic flock, and destined to be brought back by the collies of militarism, is a self-evident axiom. This process of recovery had already begun and was making visible progress. Antwerp was already practically Germanized, and Professor Delbrück, in his reply to one of my articles on German expansion, described it as practically a German port. The elections to the municipality in that flourishing Belgian town were run by the German

wealthy residents there. The lace manufactories of Belgium were wholly in German hands. So, too, was the trade in furs. A few years more of peaceful interpenetration would have seen Holland and Belgium linked by a postal and, perhaps, a Customs union with the German Empire.

In this new faith ethics play no part. The furtherance of the German cause takes precedence of every law, divine and human. It is the one rule of right living. Whatever is done for Germany or for the German army abroad or at home, be it a misdemeanour or a crime in the eyes of other peoples, is well done and meritorious. A young midshipman, going home at night in a state of semi-intoxication, slays a civilian because he imagines—and, as it turns out, mistakenly imagines—that he has been slighted, and feels bound in duty to vindicate the honour of the Kaiser's navy. He is applauded, not punished. Soldiers sabre laughing civilians in the street for the honour of the Kaiser's uniform, and in lieu of chastisement they receive public approbation. Abroad, Germans of position —German residents in Antwerp offered a recent example—worm themselves into the confidence of the authorities, learn their secrets, offer them "friendly" advice, and secretly communicate everything of military importance which they

discover to their Government, which secretly subsidizes them, and betray the trusting people whose hospitality and friendship they have so long enjoyed. Their conduct is patriotic. The press deliberately concocts news, spreads it throughout the world, systematically poisoning the wells of truth, and then vilifies the base hypocrisy of the British, who contradict it. That is part of the work of furthering the good cause of civilization. Tampering with State documents and forging State papers are recognized expedients which are wholly justified by the German "necessity which knows no law." We have had enlightening examples of them since the war broke out. Prince Bismarck availed himself of this cultural privilege when he altered the Kaiser's despatch in order to precipitate a collision with France. And the verdict of the nation was "Well done, thou good and faithful servant, who hast made such patriotic use of the maxim that the end, when it is Germany's cause, justifies the means and hallows the act." Since his day the practice has been reduced to a system.

With such principles illustrated by such examples, how could the present Imperial Chancellor regard a mere parchment treaty that lay across the road of his country's army other than as a mere scrap of paper?

That was a logical corollary of the root-principle of Pan-Germanism. Germany's necessity, of which her own Kaiser, statesmen, diplomatists, and generals are the best judges, knows no law. Every treaty, every obligation, every duty has to vanish before it: the Treaty of Bucharest, establishing equilibrium in the Balkans, as well as the Treaty of 1839, safeguarding the neutrality of Belgium. Hence nobody conversant with the nature, growth, and spread of this new militant race-worship was in the least surprised at the Chancellor's contempt for the scrap of paper and for the simple-minded statesmen who proclaimed its binding force. I certainly was not. Experience had familiarized me with these German doctrines and practices; and although my experience was more constant and striking than that of our public men who had spent most of their lives in Great Britain, they, too, had had tokens enough of the new ethics which Prussia had imported into her international policy to put them on their guard against what was coming. But nobody is so blind as he who will not see.

Pan-Germanism, then, is become a racial religion, and to historical and other sciences has been confided the task of demonstrating its truth. But if curiosity prompts us to inquire to what race its military apostles, the Prussians, belong,

and to interrogate history and philology on the subject, we find that they are not Germans at all. This fact appears to have escaped notice here. The Prussians are members of a race which in the ethnic groups of European Aryans occupy a place midway between the Slavs and the Teutons. Their next-of-kin are the Lithuanians and the Letts. The characteristic traits of the old Prussians, the surviving fragments of whose language I was once obliged to study, are brutal arrogance towards those under them, and cringing servility towards their superiors. One has but to turn to the political history of the race to gather abundant illustrations of these distinctive marks. To the submissiveness of the masses is to be attributed the ease with which the leaders of the nation drilled it into a vast fighting machine, whose members often and suddenly changed sides without murmur or criticism at the bidding of their chief. And it was with this redoubtable weapon that the Hohenzollern dynasty, which itself is German, won for the State over which it presided territory and renown. This done, and done thoroughly, it was Prussia who experimented upon all Germany in the way in which the Hohenzollerns had experimented on Prussia; and being supported by the literary, artistic, and scientific elements of the German people, succeeded thus far, and might have ended by realizing their

ambitious dream, had it not been for the interposition of circumstance which misled them in their choice of opportunity.

Thus latter-day Germany furnishes a remarkable instance of the remoulding of a whole nation by a dynasty. For the people has, in truth, in some essential respects, been born anew. The centre of its ethico-spiritual system has been shifted, and if it had a chance of gaining the upper hand Europe would be confronted with the most appalling danger that ever yet threatened. Morality, once cultivated by Germans with religious fervour, has become the handmaid of politics, truth is subservient to expediency, honour the menial of the regiment. Between the present and the past yawns an abyss. The country of Leibnitz, of Kant, of Herder, and of Goethe was marked off by fundamental differences from the Germany of to-day. The nation's ideas have undergone since then an amazing transformation, which is only now unfolding itself in some of its concrete manifestations to the gaze of the easy-going politicians of this country. So, too, have the ethical principles by which the means of pursuing the ideals were formerly sifted and chosen. The place once occupied by a spiritual force, by the conscience of the nation and the indivi-

dual, is now usurped by a tyrannical system devised by a military caste for a countless army. And this system has been idealized and popularized by visionaries and poets, professors, and even ministers of religion whose spiritual nature has been warped from childhood. To-day there is no counter-force in the land. Jesuitism, as the most virulent Calvinists depict it at its worst, was a salutary influence when compared with this monstrous product of savagery, attired in military uniform and the wrappages of civilization, and enlisted in the service of rank immorality.

What could afford our normally constituted people a clearer insight into the warped moral sense of the Prussianized German people than the remarkable appeal recently made by the " salt of the Fatherland," German theologians and clergymen, to " Evangelical Christians abroad," setting forth the true causes of the present iniquitous war ? * These men of God preface their fervent appeal by announcing to Evangelical Christians the lamentable fact that " a systematic network of lies, controlling the international telegraph service, is endeavouring in other lands to cast upon our people and its Government the guilt for the outbreak of this war, and has dared to

* Cf. *Westminster Gazette*, September 9th, 1914.

out the world, even among those who have scant sympathy with Rome, will turn with a feeling of relief to the decree of the new Pope enjoining prayers for the soldiers who are heroically risking their lives in the field, but forbidding the faithful to dictate to the Almighty the side to which he shall accord the final victory.

As historians, this body of divines have one eye bandaged, and read with the other only the trumped-up case for their own Kaiser and countrymen. They write :

" As our Government was exerting itself to localize the justifiable vengeance for an abominable royal murder, and to avoid the outbreak of war between two neighbouring Great Powers, one of them, whilst invoking the mediation of our Emperor, proceeded (in spite of its pledged word) to threaten our frontiers, and compelled us to protect our land from being ravaged by Asiatic barbarism. Then our adversaries were joined also by those who by blood and history and faith are our brothers, with whom we felt ourselves in the common world-task more closely bound than with almost any nation. Over against a world in arms we recognize clearly that we have to defend our existence, our individuality, our culture, and our honour." From the theological standpoint, then, Germany is engaged

in a purely defensive war against nations guilty of breaking their pledged word, and of wantonly attacking the peace-loving Teutons.

Nobody can read without a grim smile this misleading exposé which ignores the Austrian ultimatum to Servia, with its forty-eight hours' term for an answer; the exasperating demands which were drafted, not for the purpose of being accepted by the Belgrade Government, but with the admitted object of provoking a refusal; the fervent insistence with which the British Foreign Minister besought the German Government to obtain an extension of the time from their Austrian ally; the mockery of a pretence at mediation made by the Kaiser and his Chancellor, and their refusal to fall in with Sir Edward Grey's proposal to summon a conference and secure full satisfaction and effectual guarantees for Austria; and the German ultimatum, presented to Russia and to France at the very moment when the Vienna Government had "finally yielded" to Russia's demands and "had good hopes of a peaceful issue."* Those were essential factors in the origins of the war. Yet of these data the spiritual shepherds of the German people have nothing to say. They pass them over in silence. For they are labouring to establish in the minds of Evangelical Christians

* Cf. Sir M. de Bunsen's supplementary despatch, which is reproduced in full on pp. 129-140.

abroad their "inner right" to invoke the assistance of God for the Kaiser, who patronizes Him. This unctuous blending of Teutonic religion with the apology of systematic inhumanity reminds one of an attempt to improve the abominable smell of assafœtida with a sprinkling of eau-de-Cologne.

These comments are nowise intended as a reproach to the theologians and pastors who have set their names to this appeal. Personally, I venture to think that they have acted most conscientiously in the matter, just as did von Treitschke, Bernhardi, and their colleagues and their followers. The only point that I would like to make clear is that they have a warped ethical sense—what the schoolmen were wont to term "a false conscience." And the greater the scrupulosity with which they act in accordance with its promptings, the more cheerfully and abominably do they sin against the conscience of the human race.

The simplicity and unction with which these men come forward to vindicate their "inner right" to pray God to help their Kaiser to victory over pacific peoples, the calm matter-of-fact way in which they accuse the Belgians of revolting barbarities—for that is one of their main contentions—and justify the Kaiser's

lordly contempt of the scrap of paper, are of a piece with every manifestation of the political cult which has become one of Germany's holiest possessions. And it is because the British nation as a whole obstinately refused to listen to those who apprised them of this elemental movement, and of the dangers it concealed, that they dispensed with a large land army, slackened the work of shipbuilding, and trusted to a treaty which they are now surprised to see dealt with as a mere scrap of paper.

In like manner the British people at first smiled sceptically at the narratives of Belgians who witnessed and described the killing of unarmed men, women, and children, the finishing of the wounded on the battlefield, the living shields of women and girls with which they protected their soldiers, the taking and shooting of hostages, and other crimes against humanity. After all, it was argued, the Germans are not quite so unlike ourselves as these stories would have us believe. They, too, are men who have left wives, sisters, mothers, and children at home, and the wells of human pity are not dried up within them. They are incapable of such savagery. Those tales evidently belong to the usual class of fiction which sprouts up on all battlefields.

Yet, whatever the truth might be—and since the fiendish passions of the soldiery were let loose against Louvain, Malines, and Rheims we know that some of the narratives were based on gruesome facts—the ground at first taken up was untenable. Nobody possessing even a superficial acquaintance with Prussian history had grounds for asserting that the German army was incapable of such diabolical deeds. Its recorded doings in seasons of peace demonstrated its temper. That the officers and the rank and file are obedient to their commanders will not be gainsaid. To their Kaiser they are, if possible, still more slavishly submissive. Well, the Kaiser, when his punitive expedition was setting out for China, addressed them thus: "When you encounter the enemy you will defeat him. *No quarter shall be given, no prisoners shall be taken.* Let all who fall into your hands be at your mercy. Just as the Huns a thousand years ago, under the leadership of Etzel (Attila), gained a reputation in virtue of which they still live in historical tradition, so may the name of Germany become known in such a manner in China that no Chinaman will ever again even dare to look askance at a German." The monarch who gave utterance to those winged words was not conscious of saying aught that might shock or surprise his people. His false conscience felt no qualms. The

principle underlying this behest was the foundation-stone of Prussian culture. And the Kaiser's wish is now realized. The name of Germany, whose love of wanton destruction, delight in human torture, and breach of every principle of manly and soldierly honour are now become proverbial, will henceforward be bracketed in history together with that of the Huns.

How British people who read and stigmatized these barbarous behests, emphatically issued by the supreme ruler of the German nation and the supreme head of the German Church, should have held him who uttered or the troops that executed them incapable of the crimes laid to their charge in Belgium is a mystery. Terrorism in occupied countries has always been part of the Prussian method of waging war. It is such an excellent substitute for numbers! The examples of it given in the years 1814 and 1815 are still remembered. Since then it has been intensified. During the Boxer movement in China I witnessed illustrations of it which burned themselves in my memory. The tamest of all was when the German troops arrived in Tientsin. The nights were cool just then, and a knot of soldiers were dismayed at the prospect of spending a night without blankets. I happened to know where there was an un-

CHAPTER I

THE CAREFULLY LAID SCHEME

EUROPE'S tremendous tragedy, the opening scenes of which are now unfolding themselves to horrified humanity, is no ordinary conflict arising out of a diplomatic quarrel which timely concessions and soft words might have settled with finality. In its present issues it is the result of a carefully laid scheme of which the leaders of the German people are the playwrights and the Kaiser the chief actor. It was cleverly thought out and patiently prepared. The manifold forces let loose by the Berlin Government for the purpose of leading up to a *coup de théâtre* which involves the existence of cultured Europe had long since got beyond the control even of those who were employing them. All that was still possible was the choice of the moment for ringing up the curtain and striking the first fell blow. And, sooth to say, judging by the data in the hands of the Berlin Foreign Office, no conjuncture could have been more propitious to Germany's designs than the present. For circumstance had realized most of the desired conditions, and the Kaiser,

without hesitating, availed himself of his good fortune. It is useless to dissemble the fact that the copious information accumulated in the Wilhelmstrasse warranted the belief that there could not have been a more auspicious moment for the realization of the first part of the Kaiser's programme than the present. If Germany be indeed set apart by Providence as the people chosen to rule Europe and sway the world, the outcome of the present conflict should be to sanction this inscrutable decree of Fate. Certainly the hour has struck for which she has been waiting and keeping her powder dry during the past forty years. It is now or never.

Of this ingeniously conceived scheme the Achilles tendon was its diplomatic aspect. And here Prussian clumsiness asserted itself irrepressibly, as is its wont. A worse case with which to go before the world than that of Germany in the present struggle it would be hard to imagine. She has deliberately brought about a crude, naked might-struggle, in which war-lust and brute force are pitted against the most sacred and imprescriptible rights that lie at the very roots of organized society. And she calls on God to help her to effect her purpose.

The British nation is loath to think evil of its neighbours. It generously credits them with the best—or at any rate the least wicked—motives, and, even when the evidence on the other side is overwhelming, gives them the benefit of the doubt. How strong the evidence

was in this case I pointed out over and over again. In 1911, for instance, I wrote: "Since Europeanism was killed at Sedan and buried at Frankfurt-on-the-Main, over forty years ago, international treaties have been steadily losing their binding force. Their significance has been gradually transformed into that of historic souvenirs, symbolizing a given political conjuncture. To-day they are nothing more. The unique, solid foundation of peace that remains is readiness on the part of the peace Powers to defend it on the battlefield."

Optimists in this country objected that the German people and their Chancellor were peacefully disposed, and utterly averse to letting loose the horrors of an unparalleled war. And I replied that even if in a certain sense the optimists were right, the attitude of the German nation was beside the question. Nobody ever wants war, but only the spoils it brings. "Germany," I explained, "having spent fabulous sums of money and human labour in creating an army greater in numbers and more formidable than that of any of her rivals, would consider the military superiority which this weapon bestows upon her as a title-deed to property belonging to her competitors. She would, accordingly, demand a return for her outlay, would call for the neighbour's territory she coveted, and expect to receive it as a propitiatory sacrifice. War would not be her main object, but only the fruits of war, extorted by

threats which are more than mere words. She would virtually say to France, Belgium, or Holland, 'I have it in my power to take what I want from you, and to ruin you over and above. But I trust I may receive amicably from your sagacity what I should be forced to wrest violently from your shortsightedness.' That is at bottom a modified form of the line of action pursued by the bandit barons of mediæval Germany, a robust survival into the twentieth century." And it is exactly what has since happened. The White Paper tells the story of the German Kaiser's attempt to induce our Government to connive at the seizure of France's colonies, which Germany needed for her enterprising people.

But although for years I and some few others had been preaching the imminence of this danger which no diplomatic arguments could exorcize, the bulk of the British nation hoped on, refusing to impute to the German people the motives or the aims which we knew it entertained. In the *Contemporary Review** I was attacked by the celebrated Professor Hans Delbrück for affirming, as I have done for over twenty years, that Germany was concentrating all her efforts on the coming struggle between herself and this country, and the learned Professor did me the honour to say that so long as I was allowed to express my views on foreign politics

* "The Price of a German-English Entente." By Professor Hans Delbrück. (February, 1911.)

in the *Contemporary Review* there would and could be no entente between Great Britain and Germany. " As long as Mr. Dillon is permitted," this German Professor and successor of Treitschke wrote, " to set forth in the *Contemporary Review* his fantastic views, engendered by hatred and suspicion, about German policy, all those will be working in vain who believe that peace between our nations can be secured by arbitration treaties."* I then summed up my opinions as follows :

When I read the smooth-tongued, plausible panegyrics on Germany's politics, which are served up to us here in England every year, and contrast them with the systematic aggressiveness which everybody with open eyes and ears sees and hears in Berlin, I behold Germany rise before me in the form of a cuttlefish, with many lasso-like arms, ever ready to seize their unsuspecting prey, and also ready, when itself is in danger, to shed an ink-like fluid which blackens the water and hinders effective pursuit.

Everything that has come to pass since then offers a pointed illustration of that presentment. The attempt to obtain without a war a return for her outlay on her army and navy by calling for coveted territory as a propitiatory sacrifice was energetically made during the

* " Solange es Herrn Dillon erlaubt sein wird, in der *Contemporary Review* über deutsche Politik seine aus Hass und Argwohn erzeugten Phantasien vorzutragen, solange arbeiten umsonst, die da glauben, dass durch Schiedsverträge der Frieden zwischen unsern Nationen gesichert werden könne." —*Preussische Jahrbücher, Mai*, 1911."

Morocco crisis. But the spring of the Panther failed of its purpose. Germany's further experiences during the London Conference were likewise discouraging. The loose ranks of the Entente Powers closed up at the approach of herself and her ally, and Albania proved a mere torso. Then the supreme effort was put forth a few weeks back, and the Berlin Government, alive to the possibility of a like unfruitful result, determined to abide by and prepare for the extreme consequences, which, sooth to say, appeared to them less formidable than they really were.

Congruously with this resolve every precautionary measure that prudence prompted or circumstance suggested was adopted betimes, some secret, others public.

For the behoof of the European public the former were flatly denied, and the latter glibly explained away.

Method characterized all these preparations, towards which the British nation was particularly indulgent. Foremost among them was the increase of the German army and the levy of the non-recurring war-tax. Now, if Russia had had recourse to a measure of this kind, all Europe would have clamoured for explanations. Germany was allowed to have her way unquestioned. *Honi soit qui mal y pense.* And yet the German Chancellor dropped a hint of his real purpose which ought to have been sufficient to put Europe on its

guard. He spoke of the coming conflict between the Teutons and the Slavs. And in truth that was the keynote to the situation. In Russia it was heard and understood. Whether it was also taken to heart and adequately acted upon there is another matter. In these islands most people listened, smiled, and went their way unheeding. Yet this was the first step towards tackling the Entente Powers one by one, which constituted the alpha and omega of the Kaiser's policy.

Another of the timely precautions taken by Germany, who was resolved to make ready for every contingency, however improbable—and a general European war seemed even to her statesmen most improbable—was the purchase of horses. She despatched agents to Great Britain, and especially to Ireland, in search of mounts suitable for cavalry service, and also draught-horses. And during the months of March, April, and May large numbers of these animals were exported from the four provinces of Ireland to Hamburg without exciting protest or occasioning comment. For the British are a trusting people. And now the French army is obliged to make an effort to acquire a fresh supply of mounts, and may encounter very serious difficulties. Corn was also laid in, and heavy shipments of it went to Hamburg for the troops.

The German banking manœuvres were begun later. Enormous sums of gold were garnered

in by German financial institutions through their influential agents in England, of whom several enjoyed the friendship, but, one hopes, not the confidence, of some of our eminent public men. And even since the war began large batches of cheques and bills endorsed to London bankers by financial houses of Sweden, Denmark, Holland, Portugal, Italy, have been forwarded to London for discount and collection. Indeed, Germany appears to have been paying for foodstuffs drawn from these neutral countries in cheques and bills which, strange to say, were still being discounted here. For in this respect, too, the British are a trusting people. Even mobilization would seem to have been commenced secretly long before the crisis had become acute. We learn from the newspaper press that among the papers found on a captured German general is a service letter disciplining him for not immediately answering an order for mobilization dated July 10th, when no one outside of Germany had a suspicion that war was impending. This date enables us to gauge the sincerity of the Kaiser's efforts to "moderate" Austria's "impetuosity."

Whoever wishes to have an inkling of Germany's method of opening the diplomatic chess-game which preceded the war, and was intended to "localize" it as far as seemed conducive to her interests, must endeavour to get a glimpse of the action of the smaller hidden wheels within the wheels of official diplomacy. For the Berlin

Foreign Office worked on various lines, keeping official, semi-official, and absolutely secret agents, diplomatic and journalistic, hard at work all the time. Thus in Russia there was the titular Ambassador, Count Pourtalès, over whose head the Military Ambassador, a German officer who had access to the Tsar, and was kept posted about everything that was going on in Russia, was wont to despatch messages direct to the Kaiser. And this personage was better informed of what was being done, neglected, and planned by the Russian Government than some of the Russian Secretaries of State. He had direct access to the highest society, and indirect to every local institution in the Empire. To my knowledge, this German Aide-de-Camp in the suite of the Russian Emperor despatched detailed reports about the intrigues which were spun to oust the present War Minister, Sukhomlinoff, from his post, and have the Assistant War Minister appointed in his place. And I am able to add a piquant detail: in one of these reports he assured his chief that although the Assistant Minister, Polivanoff, is in his opinion the better man, his appointment at the then conjuncture would throw things military out of gear for a considerable time in Russia. But the Tsar was not to be tempted. General Sukhomlinoff, who is undoubtedly the right man in the right place, remained at his post.

It is hardly an exaggeration to say that Russia had no secrets whatever from the agents, diplo-

matic and military, of the German Government. Every intrigue that was woven, every scheme that was laid before the various State departments in Petrograd, every casual remark dropped by the Tsar in the intimacy of private life to a courtier, every real or supposed weakness in the Imperial defences, was carefully reported, with all the local anecdotic embroidery, and duly taken cognizance of in Berlin. Among high officials there were some who, without evil intent, but solely in virtue of what they honestly but foolishly regarded as the privilege of private friendship, were wont to unburden themselves of momentous State secrets to certain representatives of the Empire with which Russia is now at war. These representatives were made aware of the advice tendered to the Tsar by his Majesty's trusted advisers in various critical emergencies, and they announced it to their chiefs, the Tsar's present enemies. There was, for instance, a few years ago, one influential Russian statesman without whose assent the Government would undertake nothing of real importance, a patriot whose leanings towards Austria and Germany were natural and frankly proclaimed. In the interests of his country, which he identified with the triumph of his own particular party, this Russian laid bare many matters to the Austrian Ambassador, then Baron Aehrenthal, who, being himself an Austrian of the same political school of thought, warmly sympathized with his friend, and also took due note of his friend's

confidences. That, it is asserted, was the main source of Aehrenthal's spirited policy. He believed he knew Russia's weak points, and relied on their handicapping the diplomacy of the Tsar. And then his countrymen ascribed to military weakness the concessions which the Russian Government made for the sake of European peace.

I can affirm that certain State documents, which I could, if necessary, describe, were in this way conveyed to the future enemy, and that one of these, together with all the facts and figures adduced therein as proofs, contributed materially to Germany's decision to present her ultimatum to Russia, by convincing her that that Empire would not venture to take up the challenge. I make this statement with first-hand knowledge. Thus Russian ingenuousness and candour have played their part—certainly a material part—in bringing down a frightful calamity on that nation.

European and Asiatic Russia is positively weevilled with Germans. Most of the foreign trade there is carried on through the intermediary of German agents, almost every one of whom is in touch with the German Consulate of the provincial chief town. In the railway administration, too, there were numerous public servants, some of whom, by education, tradition, religion, language, and sympathy, are as German as Herr Bassermann or Admiral von Tirpitz. And all these channels of information were so many tributaries

of the great stream which flowed unceasingly between the Singers' Bridge and the Wilhelmstrasse.

For in the Berlin War Office they were informed of three matters of supreme moment, which weighed heavy in the scales when war and peace trembled in the balance. First, that the vaunted Russian gold reserve had been immobilized, and was therefore not available for war; second, that the army was unready; and third, that the Tsar, for dynastic reasons, would on no account embark on another war. In the Wilhelmstrasse and in the German War Office reports had been received setting forth in detail that the Russian land forces had been uniformly neglected in the interests of a short-sighted economy, and that the wear and tear of the army during the Japanese campaign had never been made good, could not, indeed, be made good without an enormous outlay, whereas only a few paltry million roubles had been spent on current needs in lieu of the milliards without which reorganization was not feasible. Russia, therefore, was not to be feared. And this inference was duly communicated to the German Ambassador in Vienna, M. von Tschirschky, who worked really hard and successfully to bring about the present conflict, without, however, foreseeing its extent.

The other documents turned upon Russian finances. But the burden of their message was the same. The line of reasoning and the se-

quence of allegations was this: Russia's gold reserve was indeed large, but had been spirited away. For the State Bank had lent out vast sums to the private banks, most of which are financed by German institutions. And these loans had been given, not, as in France and Berlin, for a maximum term of two months, but for six, eight, twelve, fourteen months. The private banks in turn, thirsty for profits, had distributed the money thus borrowed among private individuals, who employed it in wild speculation. And the result was that the gold reserve in Russia could not be made liquid in time should hostilities break out this year; consequently a war in the year 1914 would entail a financial crash of unconceived dimensions. As for the Russian money deposited in Berlin, it, too, was locked up there, and would be commandeered by the German Government were Russia to be forced into an armed conflict. The shock which this revelation is supposed to have given the Tsar was also described for the benefit of the Wilhelmstrasse. And the revelation itself constituted another of the elements which decided Germany to cross the Rubicon.

In France the Germans were nearly as much at home as in Russia, one marked difference being that a larger percentage of State secrets there was to be found in the newspapers. But whatever the periodical prints failed to divulge was ascertained without difficulty and reported without delay. It is a curious fact, but it is

a fact, that Germans had ready access to almost every man of mark in the Republic, and statesmen there who would hum and haw before receiving well-known Russian or British publicists were prepared to admit them on the recommendation of Germans and Austrians who made no secret of their nationality. I heard this statement in Paris, and naturally hesitated to credit it. But as it was worth verifying, I verified it. And this is what I found. Some eminent men in Paris had refused to see a certain public man of European note, some on the ground that they were too busy just then, others because it was against their custom. The foreigner was advised to renew his application at once, but through a private individual, a citizen of one of the Powers now at war with the Republic. And he did. The result was amazing. Within three days the doors of them all were thrown open to him. But the quintessence of the irony lies in one piquant detail: one of these French statesmen said to the intermediary who is now inveighing against France and the French: "Let me see. Is not that friend of yours a contributor to a periodical which is strongly pro-German? If so, I had rather not meet him at all." "By no means," was the answer. "He is very anglophile, and, of course, a great friend of France." "Ah, very well then, he can come."

CHAPTER II

THE MANY-TRACKED LINES OF GERMAN DIPLOMACY

GERMAN diplomacy never contented itself with its one natural channel. All its lines were many tracked. The Ambassador's reports were checked over his head by those of his secretaries, of the consular agents, of the military and commercial attachés, of the heads of great financial institutions and big business firms, who enjoyed and abused the hospitality of Great Britain, France, and Russia, and by the secret communications of professional spies and the disclosures made by unwitting betrayers of secrets. During the Morocco crisis the German Foreign Secretary, von Kiderlen Waechter, was in direct and continuous telegraphic contact with the first Secretary of the German Embassy in Paris, von Lanken, over the head of the Ambassador, von Schoen. And here in London Prince Lichnowsky, like his colleague Pourtalès in St. Petersburg, shrank during the period of the crisis preceding the war to a mere figure-head of the Embassy. Herr von Kuhlmann was the Ambassador. His information was treated as decisive.

His views were listened to with respect. For he always strove and generally contrived to repair to the source himself. Thus it was he who was asked to visit Ireland and send in a report to the Wilhelmstrasse on the likelihood of civil war breaking out there, and its probable duration and general effect upon the country and the Government.

Herr von Kuhlmann's communication, which was checked by the accounts of German correspondents and of a number of spies who were despatched independently to Belfast and other parts of Ulster, made a profound impression on the Kaiser and his official advisers. From the gist of it they derived their conviction, which was still strong during the week that ended on July 30th, that England's neutrality was a foregone conclusion. For a time Herr von Kuhlmann's judgment was categorical. He had no misgivings. According to him the die had already been cast, and the effect of the throw could not be altered. The British Cabinet was bound hand and foot by the sequel of its Home Rule policy. But even had it been otherwise, it was committed to peace on other grounds. The Asquith Government and the party it represented were firmly resolved not to be drawn into a Continental war, whatever its origin or its issues. That was the motive which had restrained Sir Edward Grey from contracting any binding obligations towards France.

And so unhesitatingly was this view adopted

in Berlin that when on July 29th the German Ambassador terminated one of his despatches with the expression of his personal impression—founded, he confessed, on nothing more tangible than the manner, intonation, looks of Sir Edward Grey—that if France were dragged into war Great Britain would not remain neutral, his timid warning failed to modify the accepted dogma that England was resolved to stand by inactive and look on at the shock of mighty armies on the Continent, satisfied to play the part of mediator as soon as victory and defeat should have cleared the way for the readjustment of the map of Europe.

This amazing misjudgment can be explained without difficulty. Paradoxical though it may sound, the German Government suffered from a plethora of information. It was too well informed of what was going on in Russia, France, and Britain, and too little qualified to contemplate in correct perspective the things revealed. Take, for example, Russia. Every one of the influences to which the Tsar was supposed to be accessible, every one of the alleged weak points of the General Staff, the War Ministry, the Railway administration, the Finances, were all entered in the records and weighed among the motives for action. To the Austrian Foreign Office they were communicated by the German Ambassador, von Tschirschky, with whose own preconceived opinions of Russia's inertness they dovetailed to perfection.

All these data were at the fingers' ends of the responsible leaders of the respective Governments, all the inferences drawn were set down as highly probable, and the final conclusion to which they pointed was that Russia would not fight under present circumstances, even if from a military point of view she could take the field, and that in any case she was sufficiently aware of her impotence to recognize her inability and bend before she was broken.

It is easy, in the light of recent events, to laugh at these deductions and to deride the *naïveté* of German omniscience. But on analysing the materials which Berlin statesmen had for a judgment, one discerns the reasons which led them to believe that a good prima facie case had been made out for its accuracy. One characteristic and clinching argument was advanced with an air of triumphant finality. These data, it was urged, are not theoretic assumptions formed in Germany. They are the deliberate views of competent Russians, arrived at in the conscientious discharge of their duty and uttered for the welfare of their own country. Is not that guarantee enough for the correctness of the facts alleged and the sincerity of those who advance them?

The truth is, the Berlin authorities were too well supplied with details, while lacking a safe criterion by which to measure their worth. German diplomacy is many sided, and admirably well served by a variety of auxiliary departments

such as journalism, commerce, educational establishments abroad, and espionage of a discreet and fairly trustworthy character. But congruously with the tyrannical spirit of system which pervades everything German, this paramount organon for supplying the directors of the Empire's policy with data for their guidance and goals for their many converging movements deals too exclusively in externals. Prussian diplomatists and statesmen possess a vast body of information respecting the social and political currents abroad, the condition of national defences and party governments, the antagonisms of political groups, and other obvious factors of political, military, naval, and financial strength and weakness. But these facts nowise exhaust the elements of the problem with which statesmanship is called upon to cope. There are other and more decisive agencies which elude analysis and escape the vigilant observation of the Prussian materialist. This superficial observer is bereft of a sense for the soul-manifestations of a people, for the multitudinous energies and enthusiasms stored up in its inner recesses, for those hidden sources of strength which the wanton violation of truth and justice set free, and which steel a nation to the wrenches of real life and nerve it for a titanic struggle for the right. Above all, he takes no account of a nation's conscience, which, especially in Anglo-Saxon peoples, is in vital and continuous contact with their modes of feeling, thought, and action. He is a self-

centred pedant, capable indeed of close and thorough research and of scrupulous loyalty to his own creed, but bringing to his work nothing but the materialistic maxims of a cynically egoistic school, impassioned by narrow aims, dissociated from humanity, blinded by stupid prejudices, and bereft of innate balance. It is system without soul.

Of the Russian army the Staffs of Berlin and Vienna thought meanly. "A mob in uniform," was one description. Less contemptuous was this other: "A barracks of which only the bricks have been got together, the cement and the builders being still lacking." Others there were —and these were the most serious appraisers— who held that in another five or six years the Russian land forces might be shaped into a formidable weapon of defence and possibly of offence. But this opinion was urged mainly as an argument against waiting. I once heard it supported tersely in the following way. The army depends upon finances rather than numbers. Without money you cannot train your soldiers. Ammunition and guns, which are essential conditions to good artillery fire, involve heavy expenditure. So, too, does rifle firing. Well, Russia's army has had no such advantages during the years that have elapsed since her campaign against Japan. During all that time the salient trait of her financial policy has been thrift. Grasping and saving, the State has laid by enormous sums of money and has hoarded them miserly.

One effect of these precautions has been the neglect of the army and the navy. At the close of the war Russia's navy was practically without ships and her diplomacy without backbone. And since then little has been done to reinforce them.

Two hundred and fifty millions sterling were borrowed by Russia at the close of the war with Japan, it was argued. That sum may be taken roughly to represent the cost of the campaign. But it did not cover the wear and tear of the war material, the loss of the whole navy, the destruction of fortresses, barracks, guns, private property, etc., which would mount up to as much again. What was needed to repair this vast breach in the land and sea forces was another loan of at least three hundred millions sterling more. And this money was not borrowed. Consequently the rebuilding of the damaged defences was never undertaken. Only small annual credits, the merest driblets, were allotted by the Finance Ministry to the War Office and the Admiralty, and with these niggardly donations it had been impossible to repair the inroads made by the war on the two imperial services. But the Tsar's Government, it was added, are about to turn over a new leaf. Large war credits have been voted by the Duma. Far-reaching reforms are planned for the army. Russia, awakened by Germany's preparations and warned by the Chancellor's allusion to the struggle between Slavs and Teutons, will make a strenuous

effort to fashion her vast millions into a formidable army. This work will take at least from three to five years. We cannot afford to accord her this time, nor can we blink the fact that she will never be less redoubtable than she is to-day.

That was the theoretical side of the case. It was reinforced by considerations of a concrete nature, the criticisms of Russian experts of high standing and long experience whose alleged utterances were said to bear out the conclusion that a war waged by Russia against Germany, or even against Austria, at the present conjuncture would be suicidal. Never before, it was urged, was the Tsardom less ready from any point of view for a campaign than at the present moment. And this, it was reiterated, is the ripe judgment of Russian competent authorities whose names were freely mentioned. These men, it was stated, had strongly urged the Tsar's Government and the Tsar himself to bear well in mind this deplorable plight of the army when conducting the foreign business of the Empire.

That the Russian Government was aware of the view thus taken in Berlin and Vienna may safely be assumed. For Russia kept her eyes open and knew more about German machinations and the assumptions on which they hinged than was supposed. Having had an opportunity of picking up ideas on the subject, she had not let it pass unutilized. Respecting one scheme she knew every detail; I allude to the intention of Austria and Germany to declare

the Treaty of Bucharest a mere scrap of paper. Ever since that treaty was signed, it had been the inflexible resolve of Austria and Germany to upset it. I write this with first-hand knowledge. But even had I not had this knowledge, it might have been taken for granted on a priori grounds. The Balkan equilibrium as established by that instrument was deemed lacking in stability. Count Berchtold admitted this to the British Ambassador during the critical days. Its Servian elements were particularly obnoxious to Austria, who had refrained from annexing Turkish territory on the assumption that she would be amply repaid for her self-restraint by political and economical influence in the Peninsula.

Now, this assumption had been belied by events. Salonica was under the dominion of Greece, whose leanings towards France and Great Britain were notorious and fixed. Servia had waxed great, and was striving to add further to her power and territory at Austria's expense. Bulgaria was sullen, and might become rebellious. Roumania, estranged from the Dual Monarchy, had seemingly moved within the political orbit of Russia. And even Turkey, abandoned to herself among these prospective enemies of the Teutonic Powers, was amenable to their suasion and to the pressure of France and England. Such a state of affairs could not be brooked by Austria-Hungary, who beheld her Slav possessions threatened in Bosnia, Herzegovina, and Dalmatia,

nor by Germany, who feared that her road to the sea and to Asia Minor would be blocked. Accordingly the two allies decided to apply the scrap of paper doctrine to the Treaty of Bucharest, to cut up Greater Servia, bribe Bulgaria with the Macedonian provinces which King Ferdinand had lost by the treacherous attack on his allies, deprive Greece of the islands and throw them as a sop to Turkey, win over Roumania by intimidation and cajolery, and constrain her to make a block with Bulgaria and Turkey against Servia and Greece.

This preconcerted scheme had been questioned by easy-going optimists in Great Britain before the outbreak of the war. But it has been virtually acknowledged since then not only by the Austrian Government but also by the "cream of Germany's intelligence" in a pamphlet entitled "Truth About Germany." This statement of our enemy's case was drawn up for American consumption by a committee which includes among its members Prince von Bülow, Herr Ballin, Field-Marshal von der Goltz, Herr von Gwinner, Professor Harnack, the theologian, Prince Hatzfeldt, Herr von Mendelssohn, Professor Schmoller, and Professor Wundt. In the chapter dealing with the last Balkan war as one of the causes of the present conflict, these gentlemen argue that the outcome of that struggle was a humiliation for the Habsburg Monarchy, and that it had been so intended by the Ministers of the Tsar. And then comes their important

admission that ever since the Treaty of Bucharest, the two Teutonic allies had been diligently preparing for war.

As soon as the Balkan troubles began (they write), Austria-Hungary had been obliged to put a large part of her army in readiness for war, because the Russians and Serbs had mobilized on their frontiers. The Germans felt that what was a danger for their ally was also a danger for them, and that they must do all in their power to maintain Austria-Hungary in the position of a great Power. They felt that this could only be done by keeping with their ally perfect faith and by great military strength, so that Russia might possibly be deterred from war and peace be preserved, or else that, in case war was forced upon them, they could wage it with honour and success. Now, it was clear in Berlin that, in view of the Russian and Servian preparations, Austria-Hungary, in case of a war, would be obliged to use a great part of her forces against Servia, and therefore would have to send against Russia fewer troops than would have been possible under the conditions formerly prevailing in Europe. Formerly even European Turkey could have been counted upon for assistance, but that, after her recent defeat, seemed very doubtful. These reasons and considerations, which were solely of a *defensive* nature, led to the great German military Bills of the last two years. Also Austria-Hungary was obliged to increase its defensive strength.

These preparations, America is informed, " were merely meant to protect us against, and to prepare us for, the attacks of Moscovite barbarism." But Russia's incipient army reorganization—which cannot have been very thorough, seeing that

in spite of it the German Government regarded the Russian army as incapable of taking the field—is cited as evidence of malice prepense.* Disingenuousness could hardly go further.

Any experienced European statesman would have divined this plan even without a concrete clue. I knew it, and exposed it in the columns of the *Daily Telegraph.*

* Cf. *Westminster Gazette,* September 14th.

CHAPTER III

THE PLAN AND ITS EXECUTION

But between a plan and its execution there is always a space, and sometimes an abyss. In this case the chief difficulty consisted in the ways and means, the choice lying between pacific and warlike expedients. Germany and Austria-Hungary had tried to rearrange the Balkan balance of power by diplomatic measures, but failed. Shortly before and during the Bucharest Conference I had authoritatively announced their intention to have whatever agreement the Balkan States might come to laid before them for reference and revision. Congruously with this announcement, after the Conference they endeavoured to have the Treaty submitted to them. But the other Powers negatived the demand emphatically. And Servia naturally would refuse to disgorge. Diplomacy thus proving ineffectual, other methods were contemplated, and the most promising seemed a direct conflict with Servia. For the Central European Powers could not use Turkey as their tool, owing to her financial dependence on France, the disorganized condition of her army, her naval inferiority to

Greece, and the firm resolve of Roumania to uphold the Treaty, if needs were by force. The sole remaining issue, then, was to clip the wings of the little Slav State which had so suddenly waxed great and would fain soar to dizzier heights at the cost of the Austrian Eagle. How and when to achieve this feat was the problem which had for months exercised the ingenuity of the statesmen of Austria-Hungary and Germany. The wearisome series of negociations on commercial and railway questions had to be tackled by Vienna and Belgrade, and it was expected that they would offer the requisite opportunity. But it turned out on trial that for a serious conflict they offered no suitable handle. The two military Powers then tackled Bulgaria, Turkey, and Roumania, who were to form a Balkan League, with the point turned against Russia. Austria's wish was to reach this consummation without risking an open breach with Russia, which, whatever the upshot, would have subjected her to a painful ordeal.

Here, however, Germany's statesmen were confronted with no misgivings as to Russia's attitude. Austria was fitfully apprehensive. She was ready to punish Servia and to force her to acquiesce in the partition of her recently acquired territory, but she was in dread of drawing in Russia. Germany, whose maxim was to cope with the Entente Powers, if possible one by one, not with the whole group, would also have preferred this solution, and believed

it most probable, without, of course, acting on the belief. Her estimate of Russia's military plight was, as we saw, very low. Russia's army was considered to be still suffering grievously from the effects of the Japanese campaign. Her military experts were said to be opposed to war. The Tsar himself was believed to have a horror of a fresh campaign on political and dynastic grounds.

But there was one little speck of apprehension on this otherwise cloudless horizon. In November, 1912, when a European war seemed imminent to many, Russia was in the compromising mood which tallied with Germany's expectations. But not all Russia. There was one exception, but a noteworthy one, which might possibly upset all calculations. The Tsar having felt his way by eliciting the opinions of the most experienced men around him, who were almost unanimously in favour of a compromise, heard one dissentient voice uplifted. He was advised by the Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolayevitch, the present Commander-in-Chief of the active army, not to shrink from a spirited policy solely because war might appear to loom large at the end of it. Russia could, the Grand Duke held, embark in a military conflict without any of the risks apprehended by non-military men. Her army was eager and ready. Its leaders were men of experience and tested worth, and their strategical ability nowise inferior to that of their prospective German

and Austrian enemies. In a word, it behoved Russia to pursue that policy which best harmonizes with her interests, irrespective of the deterrent which war constitutes for so many.

That was the judgment of a Grand Duke who has many friends and some enemies in his own country, but whom friends and enemies alike regard as an ideal military leader, full of dash, dauntless, and devoted to his profession with single-mindedness. Now, this man's view, the Germans argued, which was set aside just then, might prevail in a second crisis. In any case, before opening the campaign against Servia, it would be well to ascertain which way the wind was blowing. For this purpose a *ballon d'essai* might with profit be set flying. Such was the happy thought which was conceived last spring and promptly carried out.

Teuton methods are instructive, if not edifying. Almost always they are crooked, clumsy, and as recognizable as the goods marked " made in Germany " once were. The device adopted on this occasion formed no exception to the type. A long and carefully worded letter was sent to the *Cologne Gazette* by its correspondent in the Russian capital, a plodding journalist named Ulrich. In this missive he dwelt on the Russian army, its present defects and future possibilities, on the exertions which the Tsar's Government was making to reorganize it, on the rôle it was destined to play when it became effective, and on other cognate topics. The conclusion to which it

pointed was: Russia is very disorganized and weak to-day. Soon she will become redoubtable. Now is the moment for a preventive war. There will never be a better opportunity. This letter was known to have been inspired in St. Petersburg by a high official of a foreign Embassy, who himself had received instructions either from Vienna or Berlin, or both capitals. At first suspicion fell upon the German Ambassador, Count Pourtalès, but he had no difficulty in clearing himself of the charge. The message had been written and published without his knowledge. Then an ex-German adjutant of the Tsar was believed to be the inspirer of the missive. But again the public was on a false scent. I know the author—the real author—of the letter, and whence his instructions came. But even now that war is being waged by the Empires involved, I do not feel at liberty to disclose his name. Nor is it of any consequence.

What happened was what had been prearranged. All the German newspapers of importance, taking the essay in the *Cologne Gazette* as their text, inaugurated a venomous press campaign against Russia as the marplot of Europe and the enemy of the German people.

Why, it was asked, should she seek to reorganize her army if she harboured no aggressive designs against Germany and Austria? Who menaces her? Torrents of vituperation flowed through the canal of the German and Austrian press, and for a few days it looked as if diplomacy

itself would be sucked into the vortex. For nearly a fortnight this concerted attack on Russia was steadily pursued.

One day, before there were any signs of its abating, a telling article appeared in an evening paper of St. Petersburg, the *Birshevya Vedomosti*. And like the production of the *Cologne Gazette* it, too, was inspired, but inspired by the Tsar's gifted War Minister, Sukhomlinoff. And in this article were enumerated the army reforms which had been put through by the War Office since the Manchurian campaign. The peace effective, it was said, had been increased considerably, the standard of training had been raised, the fortresses supplied with material of the newest type, the artillery possessed more effective guns than those of Austria or France, the air fleet disposed of numerous aerial dreadnoughts, and Russia's army was in a position, and likewise in the mood, to assume the offensive instead of limiting itself to the rôle heretofore assigned to it by Berlin and Vienna of awaiting the enemy's onslaught.

Such was the burden of M. Sukhomlinoff's message. It was sharply criticized by the Austro-German press, in the light of the documents to which I have already alluded. Those vaunted reforms, it was urged, were all imaginary. They stood not for results achieved, but for defects to be remedied. No such results had been attained as yet, nor even striven for. They could not be attempted without the expenditure of large sums set apart for those specific purposes,

and in Berlin and in Vienna we know, as well as in St. Petersburg, that no large credits were allotted to the army. "We also are aware," it was added, "that the War Minister will shortly ask the Duma to vote a credit for these very reforms, and it is not to our interest to wait inactive until they are carried out. Within three years they are not realizable, and before the expiry of this term it behoves us to square accounts with the Tsardom."

Soon afterwards the Russian War Minister did ask the Duma for an extraordinary credit for the defences of the Empire. And he received it without a dissentient voice among the recognized parliamentary parties.

Thus the statements of the *Birshevya Vedomosti* made little impression either in Berlin or Vienna, where the belief was still hugged that Russia would have to recoil from war and adjust her diplomacy to this recognized necessity.

This belief was destined to be further strengthened by the controversy which raged around Russian finances as soon as the patriotic Premier and Finance Minister had been relieved of his duties. M. Kokofftseff had accomplished much as Minister of Finances and also as Premier. But he was cordially disliked by the Germans, whose plots and intrigues he had seen through and baulked. He had never allowed himself to be cajoled by German flattery or hoodwinked by German wiles. The alliance with France and the good understanding with Great

Britain lay at the foundations of his policy. And he made no secret of his convictions. On his fall, which was hailed as a triumph by the Germans, his home critics analysed his financial policy, and some of them charged him with niggardliness towards the army. To my knowledge, however, it was he who arranged for the extraordinary credit to be allotted to the Russian War Office, which M. Sukhomlinoff received last March.

But the gravest count in the wide indictment against M. Kokofftseff turned upon his financial operations and their alleged effect upon Russia's foreign policy, and her ability to uphold that policy by force of arms. It was asserted, as I have already said, that the free reserve of gold which was fondly supposed to be safe in the Imperial Bank, ready for any national emergency, had been dissipated for the time being and was immobilized. This enormous sum had, it was stated, been lent out by the Bank to private financial institutions throughout the Empire. One milliard and fifty million roubles! And these institutions in turn had distributed this money among private individuals, doubtless on good securities, but for unjustifiably long terms. Now, if a national crisis were to break out while these terms were still running, all that money would be locked up, the Tsar's Government would have at its disposal at most a miserable pittance of sixteen millions sterling, and the Empire would be confronted with bankruptcy.

This pessimistic judgment, embroidered with figures and calculations, was, as we have seen, treasured up in Berlin, Vienna, and Budapest, where it produced an impression that may be truly termed decisive. It certainly contributed in a large measure to change the loose belief into a hard conviction that Russia was definitely debarred from appearing on the field of battle against Austria, and, of course, against Germany. This I know. And yet the allegations in question were partly unfounded, partly exaggerated, and so little remained when truth had been sifted from fiction that the weighty conclusions based upon them by Germany and Austria lacked solid support. Subsequent events have shown this conclusively. But it was not then realized by either of the two Governments, whose leading members had pored over the figures until they knew them by heart. It is my unalterable conviction that if Germany had been delivered from this naive illusion respecting Russia, and from certain others bearing upon Great Britain and Ireland, the war now waging would have been—postponed.

Another miscalculation which played a part in heartening the Central European Powers had to do with the internal condition of the Tsardom. And it was accounted incompatible with any strenuous military endeavour. Nowadays wars are waged not by dynasties, but by armed nations. The entire nation shoulders its rifle and goes forth to do battle with the foe. But

unless it does so resolutely and unanimously, the outlook is dismal. Now, can Russia accomplish this ? it was asked. And by way of answering the query the various elements of the population were passed in review, the non-Russians coming first.

Are the Finns (it was queried) likely to join hands with the Orthodox inhabitants who have been encroaching steadily on the guaranteed rights of the Grand Duchy ? Is it not infinitely more likely that if the Tsar's army were hard pressed, these once loyal subjects would rise up against it ? And is it not equally certain that Sweden, despite her official neutrality, would lose no chance of aiding and abetting them ? Is it to be supposed that the Poles would act differently ? Have they any motive for liking Russia, still more for sacrificing themselves to succour her ? Can the Little Russians and the people of the Caucasus be credited with more cordial feelings towards their conquerors than those which animate the Finns and the Poles ? And the Jews ? Would not these be the most dangerous of Russia's foes, because they would ally themselves with the domestic as well as the foreign enemies of the Empire, creating insuperable difficulties on the railway lines, in the army, in finances ?

Coming to the Russians themselves, we find whole sections of them as badly disposed towards their Government as the Jews, the Poles, and the Finns. The industrial population is one seething mass of disaffection. Rebellion is smouldering among them, and needs only a puff of wind, such as a European war would supply in abundance, to break out into

flame.* Before Russia could decide to go to war she would have to station one army corps in Finland, another in Poland, and a third and fourth in the interior to keep order among the restless peasants, who have their own aims and grievances, which would have to be considered if war broke out. In a word, Russia is bound hand and foot. She cannot make a warlike move. And if her diplomatists speak as though she contemplated such a step, it will be nothing more than bluff.

Moving along this line of reasoning, the statesmen of Berlin and Vienna reached the comforting conclusion that they had nothing to fear from the Tsardom. And that was the crucial point that had needed elucidation. For if the Tsar's Government remained inactive while Servia was being punished and Turkey and Bulgaria bribed, there would be no cause to apprehend a hitch. Certes, no European Power would risk hostilities to help Servia out of a tight place, or, indeed, to bring about any change in the map of the Balkans. The only interference possible must come from the Tsardom, and if that Empire were indeed paralysed, opposition from the group of three Powers would be eliminated. And it was clear that Russia was, for the moment at any rate, paralysed in almost every organ. The Tsar, the Duma, the army, the War Office, the Finance Ministry,

* There is prima facie evidence for the statement that labour strikes were being actually engineered in Russia during the crisis which culminated in the present war by agents supplied with money from Germany. I cannot fairly say that this has been proven.

the ethnic elements of the Empire, held each other in check.

That this was the theory held in Berlin, and with a trifle less tenacity and conviction in Vienna, I know. I can also aver that the principal grounds on which it was based were those which I have set forth. And although it is idle now to speculate on what might have been under conditions that were not realized, I think one may fairly hazard the conjecture that if it had been proved to the satisfaction of the statesmen of Austria that their inferences and the half-truths or undiluted errors from which they drew them were indeed erroneous, and that Russia's forbearance would not stretch as far as the meditated aggression nor her resources prove as limited as her enemies' theories assumed, the ultimatum to Servia would have been worded by Austria, acting alone and in accordance with international usage, and the demands it embodied would have been whittled down to the maximum of what could reasonably have been exacted.

But Germany was literally too well informed and too little qualified to determine the bearings of the overwhelming mass of materials for a judgment which were laid before her. While immersing herself in so-called facts, she left out of sight the soul of the nation, with whose holiest possessions she was about to tamper. Despite her undoubted gifts of observation and analysis, Prussianized Germany is entirely lacking in the psychological sense. She deals with the

superficial, the obvious. As though a nation's history were the resultant of a sequence of lifeless events, of outward changes! As though the inherited streams of racial impulse, of national volition, of patriotic, irrepressible energy went for nothing in the equation! As though the latent forces and tendencies of centuries would not be brought into far resonant action by the rousing of slumbering passion, by the fire-flames which the shock of war must kindle! In all her minute calculations, Prussia's materialistic leaders lost sight of the spiritual, of the ideals that haunt a nation's soul and infuse into it in moments of stress a superhuman strength capable of working miracles. The wild enthusiasm dormant in the Russian race, but ready to start into life and action for the support of a heroic cause, constitute an algebraical *x* for the Prussian calculator, who can measure only coarse energies and brutal forces.

CHAPTER IV

FORCING THE QUARREL

PRUSSIAN logic having thus triumphantly proved that the one prospective enemy must remain quiescent, drew the obvious conclusion that the other Powers of the Entente would not move a finger to baulk Austria of her prey. And this was an all-important factor in the reckoning of the Teutonic States. Russia's active participation in the war would perhaps entail, besides the onrush of her own countless swarms, the co-operation of France, whereas the fundamental axiom of Prussia's war policy was to seek to try issues with each member of the Entente separately, and for this purpose to force such a quarrel, now upon one, now upon the other, as would leave the interests of that member's allies untouched for the time being. A further device was to constrain the enemy formally to play the part of aggressor, so as to provide a convenient bridge for the allies to withdraw within the sphere of benevolent neutrality. This latter precaution was not adopted towards Russia, the reason being the

aforesaid conviction that, come what might, Russia's inactivity was a foregone conclusion. There are convincing grounds for my statement that this consideration supplied the motive for the Kaiser's amendment to the Austrian ultimatum, limiting the time given to Servia for reflection to forty-eight hours* and for according to the Russians only twelve hours to demobilize.

Austria-Hungary, whose quarrel with Servia was the little well-spring from which the world-stream of armies took its source, showed herself some degrees less confident than her Prussian ally. Her statesmen were swayed by an instinctive forefeeling that some great element of the Russian problem was still unaccounted for and might suddenly spring up and upset all calculations. Tabulated figures and copies of the reports of certain pessimistic Russian public men carried conviction to their minds, but failed to dispel irrational fears. This despondent frame of mind was intensified by the knowledge that if the punitive expedition against Servia were to culminate in a European war, the Dual Monarchy stood to lose more than her ally. And if fortune should prove adverse, the Habsburg Monarchy would, in all probability, go to pieces.

To the members of the Vienna and Budapest Cabinets, therefore, caution seemed more imperatively demanded than to their Berlin colleagues.

* I understand that this was one of the modifications which the Kaiser himself made in the Austrian ultimatum. I know that he also altered something in that document, and made t sharper than was at first intended.

No effort, however, was spared by the German Ambassador in Vienna, von Tschirschky, to bring vividly home to Counts Berchtold and Tisza the utter disorganization of the Russian finances, armies, railways, and administration, and to dissipate their ineradicable misgivings. But in spite of the Ambassador's incessant exertions, there was ever present to the Austro-Hungarian mind a residue of doubt and disquietude which stood in jarring contrast to the insolent demands embodied in the amended ultimatum. And after that document had been presented in Belgrade, and the desired answer received from the Servian Premier, Pasitch, the anxiety of Austria's statesmen threw a still darker cloud over the vista that opened before them.

If Russia were to remain neutral during the punishment of Servia, it was plain that France, too, would keep quiet. Her Government had no concern with the way in which the Balkan equilibrium was established; it cherished no sympathies with Bosnian assassins, and it had no spare funds for military ventures. Still less were the French people desirous of embarking on a European struggle for aims which could not be made plausible to the average bourgeois taxpayer. French money had been poured into Russia in never-ending streams, but that streams of French blood should follow it was inconceivable to the mind of the people. This line of reasoning was unanswerable. Given Russia's neutrality, then France's quiescence was

unquestionable. But suppose the premisses turned out to be a mistake? Assuming, as during those anxious days Austrians sometimes did, that Russia, belying all calculations, rose up and girded her loins for battle, what then? The Republic would assuredly throw in its lot with the Tsardom. Of that it would be rash to doubt. Now, what this would mean to the two Central military States was the next question which it behoved them to put clearly and solve fully. And this is how they did it.

France (it was argued) is in the last phase of political decadence. Comfort, luxury, self-indulgence, and the financial means to procure these are the goal of her latter-day strivings. She has no faith, no moral or religious ideals, no lofty aspirations, no generous ambitions. Her enthusiasms are burnt out, her thirst for military glory is stilled by historic memories. She possesses territory enough to absorb whatever energies she may still have left. Contented to live as she now is, her one desire is to be undisturbed. Above all else, she loathes the idea of a war which would bereave her of her material well-being and force her to put forth strenuous exertions for which she no longer has the heart. Her population, and therefore the race itself, is being systematically sacrificed to this love of ease. Peace, universal peace, is the French ideal to-day, and pacificism the form in which it is popularized for the man in the street. Look at the debates on the introduction of the three years' military service in the Republic, and compare the reception accorded to that measure by the nation with the way in which the German race received, nay, welcomed, the sacrifices

imposed by the recent war-tax. The truth is, France is undergoing a process of rapid decay. The martial spirit that flashed forth during the French Revolution and nerved the nation to withstand the world was the last flicker before extinction. The people of France is dying of self-indulgence.

And coming to particulars, the public men of the Military Powers derided the army and the navy. They revelled in accounts of the long sequence of mishaps that befell French warships a couple of years ago. They savoured the stories of the powder that was not only smokeless, but fireless, when it was needed for the guns, and which exploded quickly enough to hurl ships and crews into destruction. Yet the most patriotic statesman of the Republic, M. Delcassé, was then presiding over the destinies of the Republic's sea forces. And as for the army, who, it was asked, has forgotten the exodus of its best generals and officers on account of the treatment to which their views on religion subjected them? Here in Germany we have Catholic generals and officers fighting side by side with Protestants and Atheists, because one and all we are and feel ourselves Germans. It is possible that our Government or our Kaiser may impose a Professor on a University because he is an Orthodox Lutheran or a good Catholic, as was the case when the Kaiser sent Professor Spahn to a University chair in order to conciliate the Centre. But is it conceivable that any man, however influential or favoured, should receive a command in the German army or navy on other grounds than his strictly technical qualifications? Of course not. If we possessed a really good strategist, he would make his way to the top even if he were an incarnate demon. We have no political appointments

in either of our services. There the maxim is supreme that the career is open to talents. For over forty years we have concentrated all our energies, diplomatic, financial, scientific, technical, upon the creation of two formidable weapons of defence and aggression, and have subordinated every other consideration to that end. What other people in Europe has done this, nay, attempted it? And we now possess that weapon. There is not the slightest doubt that if the Republic were foolish enough to venture all it has and is on the issue of a war with Germany, it would not stop at this blunder. It would go further, and select for its army leaders men who are good radicals or republicans, and who never go to mass, rather than able military men who can handle millions of soldiers and make their mark in strategy.

"You must surely have read the disclosures about the plight of the French army recently made by Senator Humbert," politicians remarked to me. "They reveal a condition of affairs which renders France, as we say in German, 'harmless.' It would be a mistake, therefore, to take the Republic too seriously. Such fighting power as is left in her is but a pithless simulacrum of what once was hers. You doubt the accuracy of the Senator's allegations? But they are of a piece with everything else we saw and heard and knew of France long before M. Humbert rose to complain of the mess his friends and colleagues had made of the national defences. But if you want a more direct proof, read the corroborating testimony of the present War Minister, M. Messimy. That personage must surely know. He took stock of his department before uttering his opinion. And he endorsed the judgment of the Senator. No. France among

virile nations is what Maxim Gorky's 'beings that once were men' are among the social classes. She is to be included among the submerged. And that is why your Government will shake her off if she is drawn into war for Russia's sake. You cannot save a nation against itself. And France is dying gradually of self-inflicted wounds.

"One of the most valuable assets of a nation which has to hold its possessions by force of arms is the ease and rapidity with which it can get its fighting men and material together and throw them into the enemy's country. Well, no country can approach Germany or even Austria in this respect. Our system of mobilization goes with unparalleled smoothness and velocity. To use a slang phrase, which is not without picturesqueness, it works with the swiftness and sureness of greased lightning. Now of all countries in Europe, Russia herself not excepted, the French are the most backward in this respect. Forty-four years' peace have not provided them with leisure enough to make perceptible progress in this elementary operation of war."

To my query on what grounds this amazing statement could be advanced and supported, I was treated to a sort of lecture on the subject which was then applied to the French railway system in the following ingenious way:

What mobilization is to a campaign, the railway system of a country is to mobilization. Almost everything depends upon the smooth and rapid running of the trains from all parts of the country to the base, and from there to the front or fronts. Order and rapidity are essential to success. And

in the railway system of the Republic you look for these qualities in vain. To you who have travelled much in France the truth of this statement should be self-evident. Everybody who has used the German and French railways has had the contrast between them borne in upon him unpleasantly. Once off the principal lines in France, you find yourself in a railway sphere a quarter of a century behind the times. Examine the rolling stock, inspect the carriages, watch the railway officials at their work, compare the time-tables with the actual hours of the trains' departure and arrival, and you will then be able to form some notion of the disadvantage under which the French armies would begin a campaign against this country. They would resemble the warrior who, having set out for the field of battle, had to go home for the weapons which he had forgotten.

Military transport in war-time is a much more formidable enterprise than the conveyance, say, of agricultural produce in peace. In fact, there is no comparison between them. But if the easier of the two problems makes impossible demands on the railway system, one is warranted in concluding that the more difficult one will prove wholly beyond its capacities. Well, that demonstration has already been made in the eyes of the world.

The test case occurred in the autumn of the year 1911, and we watched it closely.* In Austria-Hungary, Germany, Switzerland, and Italy the fruit-crops had failed, and the demand for fruit in those countries was unprecedented. Most of their supplies had to be drawn from France. On the French rail-

* I endeavoured to draw the friendly attention of the French Government to these striking defects in an unsigned article which I published at the time.

ways, therefore, an unusually heavy strain was put, very much less, of course, than one would look for during a general mobilization, but still a telling strain. One difference, however, there was between the two emergencies: the export of French fruit in abnormal quantities had been anticipated and prepared for in advance, whereas the need for mobilization might make itself felt unawares and without any margin of time for preparative measures. Well, the French railway administration provided for the exportation of these enormous quantities of fruit no less than 15,000 wagons. The average distance over which this produce had to be conveyed was in round numbers six hundred miles.

Some of the trains accomplished the journey much quicker than others. But the swiftest of them all took twelve or thirteen days. And these expeditious ones were few. The next in order required three weeks—three whole weeks for a journey of 600 miles in peace time, and despite a long notification and elaborate preparations. But some of the trains were four, five, and even six weeks on the way. One hundred miles a week for perishable fruit, which rotted at the stations and sidings! Now, over against this speed-rate of thirty miles a day in normal times, you have to set the speed of the German and Austrian military train in war-time. It is thirty miles an hour. And the German goods trains running to the western borders of the Empire go from six to eight and a half times more quickly than the French.

With the reasons for this astounding backwardness we are not, they went on to say, concerned. That is the business of the Republic, not ours. Speaking summarily, one might fairly ascribe it to the lack of sufficient numbers of

side stations, soundly laid rails, of engines and rolling stock, and last, but nowise least, to the Republican system of railway administration. In this branch of the public service, as in the army and the navy, what is most peremptorily required is authority, and that in France is lacking. Everybody wants to command, nobody cares to obey. Not only an army, but also a railway administration should be organized on the lines of an absolute monarchy—of a despotic State, if you like—one man's will and its manifestations, direct and indirect, being law, and from that law there should be no facile appeal. Unless this condition is realized, you cannot reasonably expect to get from the railway mechanism all the advantages which the general staff should be able to count on securing from it in war-time. This is especially true in France, where personal jealousy or disfavour so often disqualifies talent and pitchforks mediocrity into the high places of responsibility and trust. In short, France is politically moribund. From her we have nothing to fear. She will certainly not go to war to shield Servia from well-deserved punishment. And that is precisely the present issue.

On two occasions since then these strictures and the German anticipations which were built upon them came back to my mind with painful vividness. During the first couple of weeks after the war, I heard the Belgians in Liége, Louvain, Brussels, Alost, Ghent, and Bruges anxiously inquiring, "Where are the French troops that should be here to succour us? When are they coming? It is only a few hours' railway journey to Paris. Why are they not here? Surely they have had

ample time to get to Belgium." And when I ransacked my brain for a comforting reply, all I found there was the image of the German statesman propounding his view of French railways and the chaotic confusion which would accompany and retard mobilization.

The second time I recalled that conversation on reading the newspaper accounts of the fall of Namur. The Namur forts were to have held out for weeks or months, we had been told, because they were the most powerful in Europe, and also because the triangle between the Sambre and the Meuse was held by French army corps in great force. But it turned out that the French troops which were believed to be there had not yet arrived, owing to difficulties that had been encountered *in the mobilization*. These were the difficulties that had been foretold me, that were confidently counted upon by the German War Ministry, and of which I warned the French Government over two years ago.

Those statements were volunteered to me in order that I should make them known in Great Britain as arguments to be taken into account when the attitude of our own Government came up for discussion. As a matter of course, I never brought them forward, my own conviction having been uttered in season and out of season for twenty years—that all Germany's energies, military, naval, financial, commercial, diplomatic, and journalistic, had been focussed upon exhaustive preparations for a tremendous

struggle to establish Teutonic supremacy in Europe, that that struggle was unavoidable, and that the German war-machine was in all respects worthy of the money, time, and energies that had been spent on creating and perfecting it, and that no European army could compete with it. Over and over again I expressed my regret at finding the people of Great Britain irrationally hopeful and unsuspecting, utterly ignorant of Germany's systematic strivings and subversive machinations, yet unwilling to learn from those who were conversant with these matters. A considerable section of the French people was equally trustful and supine. They were the blind of the class that will not see. They pointed to the honest Chancellor, to the peace-loving Kaiser, to the fair-minded professors and journalists who had assured the British people that it had nothing to fear, and to the treaties which they considered binding. They laughed to scorn the notion that these instruments would be treated as scraps of paper.

In October, 1911, I wrote:

The truth is, in this country we fail utterly to fathom the German *psyche*, just as in the Fatherland they misunderstand the workings of the national British soul. What is meanwhile clear enough is that the peace of Europe is at the mercy of well-armed, restless, ill-balanced Germany; that no section of that gifted and enterprising people differs sufficiently in its mode of thought and feeling from any other section to warrant our regarding it as a

check upon rash impulse, vengeful aggression, or predatory designs; *that treaties possess no binding or deterrent force, and that friendly conduct on the part of Great Britain or France has no propitiatory effect. Brute force is the only thing that counts; and henceforth the Peace Powers must store it up at all costs.**

Three months later I wrote:

Germany would fain get wealthy colonies without the sacrifice of money and blood, but she is bent on getting them, cost what they may. And that is one of the main factors which it behoves us to bear in mind. Another is that in the pursuit of her aims she deems all means good. Success is the unique test. "You can expect forgiveness for a breach of faith only from a foe worsted on the battlefield," says a latter-day German aphorism.†

Those statements, forecasts, and warnings were clear and emphatic. I had been urging them on the attention of the British nation for twenty years. But the bulk of the British nation refused to think evil of their German cousins, whom I was believed to be calumniating.

But I continued to set the facts as I knew them before the public, and the line of action which our rivals would, and we should, follow under those difficult conditions I sketched briefly in the following words:

The spirit in which German statesmen deem it meet and advantageous to hold intercourse with foreign nations is apparently as far removed from

* *Contemporary Review*, October, 1911, p. 569.
† *Contemporary Review*, January, 1912, p. 111.

ours as the moon from the earth. Not only sentimentality, but more solid motives which can be much less easily missed, are lacking. . . . The practical outcome of this would seem to be that British relations towards Germany should be marked by cordiality, frankness, and a desire to let live, bounded by the vital necessity of abstaining from everything calculated to give umbrage to our intimate friends. And in the second place, from this line of conduct *we should look for no abiding results, because it cannot touch the heart of the rival nation.**

But the faith of the easy-going British people and Government in Germany's honour and in the sincerity of her peace professions was unshaken. They seemed possessed by the demons of credulity and pacificism. Like the Russian Tsar who on the eve of the Manchurian campaign exclaimed, "There cannot be war because I am in favour of peace," they fancied that because Great Britain was satiated with territory and only demanded to be left in the undisturbed enjoyment of what she possessed, therefore Germany, who yearned for territorial expansion, would suppress her longings, relinquish her costly plans, and likewise work for peace. That, too, was the belief of our own Government, with the exception of a few permanent officials who, having travelled, heard, and seen what was going on, yielded to the evidence of their senses and bore witness to what they knew.

Accordingly the British Foreign Office set

* *Contemporary Review*, January, 1912, p. 114.

its hand to the work of establishing peace, animated by a spirit of compromise which, sooth to say, is rare in these days of national egotism and narrow patriotic endeavour. Lord Haldane visited Berlin. An exchange of views took place between that capital and London. Hopes of arriving at an understanding on all points were entertained and expressed. And I, as a friend of peace and a citizen of my country, felt bound to second those endeavours to the best of my limited means. But I took care to accompany my support with a warning. For I regarded Prussia's attitude as a snare. Acquainted with the methods of her diplomacy, I recognized the trail of the serpent in the movements of the dove. This is what I wrote :

After a long period of political estrangement Great Britain and Germany are now circumspectly endeavouring to make friends again. The effort is painful and success is dubious, but it is recognized that the present conjuncture is the flood-water of opportunity. It must be now or not until after distrust has become enmity, and peaceful rivalry has degenerated into war. . . . It is felt that whatever is feasible in the way of healing the wounds which are still aching must be effected at once. The British Government and nation not only favour an understanding, but are eager to see it arranged. They are prepared to make sacrifices for it, on condition that it is no mere semblance of a settlement.*

But I made it clear that we could " look for no abiding results " from any settlement of our

* *Contemporary Review*, April, 1912, p. 566.

differences to which we might come, because we were dealing with a Government and a nation whose assurances are worthless, and whose promises are no more than a scrap of paper. Since then the Imperial Chancellor has borne out what I then advanced in words and acts that have branded his nation with the stigma of infamy.

But the well-meaning pacifists of all shades and degrees, from the wordy interpreters of Prussian philosophies in high places down to the credulous man in the street, who pinned his faith to the business instincts of our German customers, clung tenaciously to their comfortable faith. At last, five months ago, I uttered a further warning:

> Among the new or newly intensified currents of political life now traversing the Continents of Europe, none can be compared in its cultural and political bearings and influence with the rivalry between the Slav and Teutonic races. This is no mere dispute about territorial expansion, political designs, or commercial advantages. It is a ruthless struggle for mastery in all domains of national and international existence, which, so far as one can now see, may at most be retarded by diplomatic goodwill on both sides, but can hardly be settled with finality by any treaty or convention. For here we are dealing with an instinctive, semi-conscious movement which obeys natural laws, and not with a deliberate self-determining agency which may be modified by argument or swayed by persuasion.*

* *Contemporary Review*, April, 1914, p. 571-2.

In that same article I gave Germany's plea for a preventive war, which I felt was then in the air. And I quoted the pregnant remark of my German colleague of the *Berliner Tageblatt*, who deliberately wrote: "It cannot be gainsaid that the growth of Russia is in itself a peril." This chosen people, these apostles of culture and humanity, could not brook the natural growth of a gifted neighbour. Russia must be exterminated that Germany might thrive.

The Governments of Germany and Austria-Hungary then considered that the odds against Russia's participation in a war to shield Servia were, under the existing conditions, almost tantamount to certainty. The German Ambassador in Vienna stated this positively to our Ambassador there and to his other colleagues. It was an axiom which admitted of no question. It followed that France and Great Britain would also hold aloof, and a duel with a foregone conclusion could, under these propitious conditions, be fought by Austria against Servia. And this was the state of things for which the Central European Powers had been making ready from the conclusion of the Bucharest Treaty down to the assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand. This monstrous crime, for which there are neither excuse nor extenuating circumstances, wholly changed the aspect of affairs, and provided the Teutonic allies with a most welcome war-cry which was sure to rally their friends, while immobilizing

their enemies. It was not, therefore, to be wondered at that they took such a long time to study the ways and means of utilizing it to the fullest. And in this they succeeded so well that France, Great Britain, Italy, and even Russia freely admitted Austria's right not merely to punish Servia for her aggressive agitation, but also to take effective guarantees for her future good behaviour.

Never before was European public sentiment so universally and whole-heartedly on the side of Austria-Hungary. Every nation and political party sympathized with her aged monarch and supported the legitimate claims of her Government. If the grievances ostensibly put forward in Vienna and Budapest, and recognized by all civilized peoples, had really represented the full extent of what Austria desired to see redressed once for all, there would have been no war. And left to herself, Austria would probably have contented herself with this measure of amends for the past and guarantees for the future. But she was not a free agent. In all fundamental issues she is the vassal of Prussia. And the development of this crisis brought out their inseparability in sharp outline and relief. Every act of the Austro-Hungarian Government, from the moment when the Archduke fell in Sarajevo to the declaration of war against Servia, was conceived with the knowledge and collaboration of Berlin, and performed sometimes at its instigation and always with its approval.

Germany herself is commonly said to have

been bent upon war from the outset of the crisis. Conscious of her readiness for the struggle, she is supposed to have been eager to seize on the puissant war-cry afforded her by the crime of Sarajevo to profit by the military unpreparedness of France, Russia, and Great Britain, and the internal strife in these countries, which had seemingly struck their diplomacy with paralysis and disqualified their Governments from taking part in a European conflict.

That this theory is erroneous I know on the highest authority. Having watched, sometimes at close quarters, the birth, growth, cultivation, and ripening of the scheme which has now borne fruit in the bitterest and most tremendous war on record, and having had more than once some of the decisive State papers under my eyes, I can affirm that Germany's hope and desire and striving were on the opposite side. She deprecated a European war sincerely. She sought to ward it off by every means compatible with the realization of her main scheme, and she was disappointed beyond words at her failure. Her main scheme was to deal with each of the Entente Powers separately, and to reserve Great Britain for the last. And it was presumably in furtherance of this programme that Admiral von Tirpitz tendered his advice to the Kaiser—as we are told he did—not to break with England yet, but to conciliate her by every available means, and thus to gain time for the German navy to reach the standard which would enable it to cope with ours.

That the German scheme of separating the Entente Powers and crushing them one by one was feasible will hardly be denied. One has only to read the recent diplomatic correspondence on the crisis in the light of certain other data to realize how lucky the Entente Powers may account themselves at having been provoked one and all by Germany. Each Power felt strongly tempted to circumscribe its own interests to the narrowest limits, and to keep its powder dry until these were manifestly assailed. That was the temper of the Entente States. "In the present case," Sir Edward Grey explained to the German Ambassador, "the dispute between Austria and Servia was not one in which we felt called to take a hand. Even if the question became one between Austria and Russia, we should not feel called upon to take a hand in it."

Clearly, then, Germany might tackle Russia without drawing Great Britain to the side of her enemy. But even "if Germany were involved," the Foreign Secretary went on to say, "and France became involved, we had not made up our minds what we should do." Consequently it might well seem no great feat of diplomacy for Germany to set inducements and deterrents before us sufficiently powerful to keep us neutral. In no case was the Prussian scheme of dealing separately with each Power chimerical.

The invasion of Servia as the first step had a twofold object for Germany, who encouraged it from the outset: first, to gratify her Austrian

ally, on whom Servia had in truth inflicted terrific losses during the past four years, thus enabling the Habsburgs to cripple the independent Slavs of the South, and obtain guarantees against the recurrence of the evil ; and then to compel the principal Balkan States to form a block against Russia, so that they could be relied upon as a new Great Power in the coming struggle against that Empire. On this subject I write with knowledge, having myself taken a hand more than once in the international negociations which had the Balkan equilibrium for their object. The first phase in the Teutonic advance towards supreme world-power, then, was the tossing aside of the Bucharest Treaty as a worthless scrap of paper, and the formation of this Balkan League. And the first serious obstacle to it was raised by myself in a series of negociations which may be made public elsewhere.

Germany, therefore, was not anxious to bring about a European war just yet. On the contrary, her efforts to postpone it were sincere and strenuous. And to her thinking she had reduced the chances of a clash of nations to a faint possibility. Consequently it would be much nearer the mark to say that, convinced that she would succeed in " localizing the war," she was bent on carrying out her policy in every event, but that this policy being ultimately found incompatible with the vital interests of Russia, the limits of whose forbearance she had miscalculated, led necessarily to the present conflict. But for this emergency, too, she had been ex-

tensively preparing and deemed herself quite ready. Into Germany's calculations and expectations I have more than once had an insight, and I can affirm that she was twice out in her reckoning of the probabilities. I ought, however, emphatically to add that even for one of these miscalculations she made due allowance. When the latent crisis became acute the opinion prevailed in Berlin that the stability of the Tsar's dynasty, as well as the solvency and the integrity of his Empire, were bound up with the maintenance of peace, and thatRussia, being thus fettered, Austria would be allowed, with certain formal reserves, to have a free hand against Servia. And Germany's initial efforts were directed to enlisting the co-operation of Great Britain and of France in the task of securing this advantage for her ally. That is why she was credited with a praiseworthy desire to restrict the war-area as much as possible.

As we have seen, the grounds for Germany's optimistic forecast were reinforced by the opinions of certain Russian authorities. These experts strongly held that a war with Germany would open the sluice-gates of disaster for their country. There are always such Calchases in every land, but Russia possesses an abnormally large number of them. Some of these views were committed to paper, laid before the highest authorities, and also reported simultaneously to the Foreign Office in Berlin. The financial, military, and political considerations adduced in support of these conclusions were also

fully set forth in the communications on the subject which Germany's agents in St. Petersburg supplied to the Wilhelmstrasse. Much of interest might be written on this aspect of the preliminaries to the war—much that is striking, instructive, and in a way sensational—but this is hardly the moment for anything in the nature of startling disclosures.

In what the policy consisted which Germany and Austria pursued under the mask of indignation against the Servian abettors of murder is well known by now even to the general public. Over and over again I unfolded it in the columns of the *Daily Telegraph;* and from the day on which ominous rumours about Austria's expected Note to Servia began to disquiet Europe, I announced that the assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand was but the flimsiest of pretexts, that Austria was minded to take the initiative in the struggle of the Teutons against the Slavs, and that the European press was making a strange mistake in accepting the theory that her aim was the condign punishment of the accomplices of the assassins. I added that this was no dispute, in the ordinary sense of the term, between Austria and Servia; it was only a question of which of the two could impose its will on the other. In a word, it was a trial of strength—*eine Machtfrage.*

Germany's aim, I repeat, was, and had long been, to sever the bonds that linked France with Russia, so as to be able to tackle each one sepa-

rately. The methods to which her statesmen had recourse in order to effect a severance between the two allies were of a piece with the expedients now being resorted to for the purpose of egging on Turkey to a breach of her neutrality—such as the forging of Mr. Burns' alleged oration and the speech of the Lord Mayor of London against the war. But some of them which have never yet been even hinted at are far more sensational even than this. One of the Kaiser's own little schemes which has never been mentioned even in well-informed diplomatic circles outdid in breeziness the episode of the scrap of paper.

The Entente was to be dealt with like an artichoke—to have leaf after leaf torn off. To attain this Germany employed fair means and foul—first flattered and cajoled the French—and when blandishments failed passed abruptly to brutal threats. But her diplomacy in its obsequious as well as its menacing mood had failed of its purpose. And now war was to be essayed as a means to the end, but a war with Servia only. Its objects, as we saw, were materially to weaken Slavdom, humiliate Russia, create a Balkan League against that Empire, and supply an object-lesson to those politicians in France who were opposed to the alliance with the Tsardom, on the ground that it might at any moment involve the Republic in a sanguinary struggle for obscure Slav interests. The duel contemplated was to be confined to Austria-Hungary

and Servia. Every lever was to be moved to keep it restricted to that narrow compass. As an Austrian victory would ensure a partial dismemberment of Servia, to be followed by a new grouping of the Balkan States—this time under the ægis of the Habsburgs—the Central European Powers would have won a most useful ally in the shape of a new and compact Balkan League.

A partnership of Turkey, Bulgaria, Roumania, and Greece, under the lead of Austria and Germany, Servia being constrained to keep the step with these, would have constituted a stout bulwark against the tide of Slavdom flowing towards the Adriatic, and a puissant ally in the event of a European war. That this was a real scheme, and is not merely an inference or an assumption, may be taken as certain. I became acquainted with the details of it at its inception. Bulgaria knows it and Turkey knows it. Bulgaria's pressing offer, made to Turkey at the very moment when I was successfully endeavouring to obtain the assent of the Porte and of the King of Greece to a treaty which I had drawn up for the settlement of all their differences, was brought to my cognizance. Happily, the suggested deal was scrutinized and rejected by the Porte. Turkey, as represented by Talaat Bey, had brought an open mind to the matter, allowing herself to be swayed only by her own interests; and as it appeared that these would fare best by the treaty which I proposed, she assented to this. Greece, needing

permanent peace as a condition of internal development, showed herself amenable to reason and ready to compromise. And she, too, agreed to the treaty. Roumania, animated by a like broad and liberal spirit, was steadfastly opposed to every move, by whomsoever contemplated, which was likely to jeopardize public tranquillity or modify the Treaty of Bucharest, and favoured every arrangement capable of imparting stability to the *status quo*.

But perseverance and importunity are characteristic traits of German methods in diplomacy as in commerce. And on this occasion they stamped her Balkan policy with the well-known cachet of the Hohenzollerns. The moment it was decided that the Austrian demands should be so drafted as to ensure their rejection by Servia, the two Central European Powers set to work anew to stir up opposition to the Treaty of Bucharest, realize the scheme for a Balkan League with its sharp point turned against Russia, and have a large part of King Peter's realm carved up by the Balkan States themselves without the ostensible intervention of Austria or Germany. This is an important point in the march of events which preceded the war—a point, too, which, so far as I am aware, has not been noticed by any publicist or statesman.

It is worth a moment's consideration. The world has not forgotten the assurance which Austria gave to Russia as an inducement to hold her hand and allow Servia to be punished. It

took the shape of an undertaking that the Dual Monarchy would not annex any portion of Servian territory. Now, on the face of it, this was a concession the worth of which, from Russia's point of view, might well be reckoned considerable. And in truth it had great weight with the St. Petersburg Foreign Office. For it seemed to imply that at the close of Austria's campaign against Servia the vanquished Slav State would at any rate lose none of the land of which it was possessed before the war. That was the obvious meaning of the official Austro-Hungarian assurance, and it was construed in this sense by all the Chancelleries of the Entente Powers without exception. It worked as a motive to lure Russia to the far-reaching concessions she offered to Austria-Hungary in the hope of "localizing the war." Sir M. de Bunsen wrote to Sir Edward Grey that the Austrian Minister of Foreign Affairs thought "that Russia would have no right to intervene after receiving his assurance that Austria sought no territorial aggrandisement."

But in reality the phrasing of this self-denying promise was deceptive. Austria undertook that she would not incorporate Servian territory in her own Empire, but in reading this declaration the accent should be laid on the word *she*. She would refrain from cutting off slices of Servian territory *for herself*. But it was resolved, none the less, that Servian territory should be carved up and partitioned

among Servia's neighbours—Bulgaria, Turkey, and Albania. The three Greek islands—Samos, Chios, and Mytilene—were to revert to their late owner. Russia never suspected this curious wile. Otherwise she would not have fallen into the trap as she did. That it was part of a deliberate plan which Germany and Austria set about realizing is established beyond question. Neither can it be gainsaid that the form of words chosen later on by Germany for the assurance she offered to Sir Edward Grey respecting the integrity of France left room, and was meant to leave room, for a similar subterfuge. To my knowledge, and to that of at least one European Chancellery, Germany decided on making an offer to Italy of Tunis, Nice, and Savoy, all which she might claim and receive as a recompense for active co-operation during the war. And this by-compact was deemed perfectly consistent with her promise to Sir Edward Grey. Whether that bid for co-operation was actually made to Italy, I am unable to say. That it was one of the inducements to be held out to the Consulta, I know.

Meanwhile Turkey was exhorted to throw aside the Treaty which I had drafted, and which was to have been signed by the Grand Vizier and M. Venizelos at my house during the week ending on August 3rd. She was further urged to close with Bulgaria's offer of a treaty of partition without delay, and to make common cause with her. At the same time M. Venizelos

was advised to treat with King Ferdinand's representatives, and come to an arrangement by which Bulgaria should retake from the Serbs "the territory which by right belongs to them," and a certain lesser slice from Greece, who would receive in turn partial compensation and perpetual guarantees. Moreover, all Bulgaria's territory, new and old, should be insured by Turkey and Greece. A draft of this treaty actually existed. In case of refusal, Greece was menaced with the loss of everything she had acquired by her Balkan victories. How these suggestions were received I had no means of learning. But the final upshot is disclosed by recent events. Turkey, eager to regain some part of what she lost, and believing the present moment propitious, lent herself readily to Germany's designs. It was only after the infraction of her neutrality by the warships *Goeben* and *Breslau*, and moved by fear of the consequences to which her connivance had exposed her, and by the proofs adduced that neutrality would pay better than a fresh Balkan campaign, that she reined back. She now apparently takes a modified view of the situation, and the more statesmanlike of her leaders recognize that, after all, her interests may turn out to be dependent upon the goodwill of the Entente Powers. But Enver Pasha, a Pole by extraction and a German by sympathy, still seems bent on exposing the Ottoman Empire to the risks of a single cast of the die.

CHAPTER V

GERMANY'S PROGRAMME

GERMANY'S programme, then, from the beginning of the crisis resolves itself into two parts: to restrict the war in the sense that Austria's enemy was to have no allies, and to extend it by letting loose against Servia as many of the Balkan States as could be enlisted by enticing promises. Congruously with the first object, the seemingly humane movement in favour of "localization" was approved by the Chancellor, localization being construed to mean the neutrality of Russia. And for a time it was not merely hoped, but believed, that Russia would remain quiescent. Indeed, this belief was, as we have seen, the groundwork of the policy with which the German Ambassador in Vienna identified himself.

M. von Tschirschky is one of those convinced, acidulous Russophobes who are obsessed by racial hatred of an intensity which men of the English-speaking races are unable to realize. His diplomatic methods extend far beyond the limits within which the average Ambassador and

diplomatist feels it his duty to keep his activity, In proselytizing he is an adept; but his limitations are those of countrymen and class. He had lived in St. Petersburg, where his diplomatic career was Sisyphus work, and ever since then the keyword of his policy has been *delenda est Moscovia.* Nor was he concerned to dissemble his passion. Every politician in Austria, native and foreign, was aware of it, and when diplomatists there heard that he had been enjoined by his Chief to plead the cause of moderation in Vienna, they shrugged their shoulders and grinned. He assured the Austrian Government that, from information in possession of the Wilhelmstrasse, Russia was powerless to strike a blow. "She is a negligible quantity," he repeated. "If her armies were to take the field the dynasty would fall. And the Tsar, alive to the danger, is resolved to steer clear of it. Were he prevailed upon to run the risk, the whole political and financial structure would fall to pieces like a pack of cards." And he was certain of what he advanced. He honestly deceived himself before misleading his friends. Parenthetically, it may be well to remind the reader that this contention about Russia's military impotence, which was accepted in Vienna as well as Berlin, makes short work of the plea now advanced that it was Russia's bellicose attitude that provoked Germany. The contrary proposition is true. Germany was aggressively insolent because Russia was believed to be militarily powerless. That is why Austria's

ultimatum to Servia was so indited that a refusal could be counted upon.

The history of that Note is curious. The assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand was fastened upon as a fitting pretext for mutilating the Servian State. Servia's Government and the entire class of intellectuals from which it was drawn were stigmatized as the real authors of the crime. The murder itself was declared to be but a typical act of an unprincipled political organization which had ramifications all over the land, including all political parties, the clergy, and the teaching bodies. Bomb-throwing, assassination, and a subversive propaganda in Bosnia and Herzegovina were alleged to be among its recognized methods. Austria-Hungary, it was contended, could not lead a normal life so long as this state of affairs was allowed to endure. It must, therefore, be transformed radically. But no transformation could be effected until Servia was brought to her knees by the Habsburgs and forced into the groove of chronic quiescence which had been destined for her by the murdered Archduke. In other words, she must become a satellite of her powerful neighbour, and subordinate her policy, military, commercial, and foreign, to that of the Ballplatz. This was the programme, most of which had been adopted some eighteen months before, during the factitious excitement about the imaginary murder of the Austrian Consul, Prochaska, by the Serbs. I announced it in the

Daily Telegraph at the time. Since then it had been kept in abeyance, and now the crime at Sarajevo was held to have supplied a favourable conjuncture for reviving it.

That official way of stating the grounds of the quarrel had one great advantage. It identified Servia with monstrous crime and Austria with law and justice. Foreign Governments which set a high value on the reign of order and tranquillity would, it was hoped, be deterred from giving countenance to such a nation of criminals as Servia was alleged to be. By way of strengthening this deterrent, they were reminded of the stain on Servia's honour contracted when King Alexander and his consort were brutally done to death. By that crime, it was alleged, the present King himself had been compromised, and was consequently now powerless to curb his unprincipled subjects, on whose goodwill his own tenure of office depended. From Servia's goodwill, therefore, there was nothing to be hoped. But if regeneration could not come from within, it must proceed from outside. And as Austria's political interests were also at stake, she would undertake the work of sternly punishing crime and efficaciously preventing its recurrence. To this rôle no civilized Power could reasonably demur without laying itself open to a charge of fomenting a vast criminal organization which it behoves monarchs and people alike to put down by every means in their power. This was the argument

by which Russia was to be floored. It was also the bridge over which she would, it was assumed, recoil from Servia when Servia was at grips with Austria-Hungary.

Now in that chain of allegations there was at least one link of truth. Servian propaganda in Bosnia and Herzegovina had certainly been unceasing, resourceful, and dangerous. It had also inflicted enormous losses on the population of the Dual Monarchy. And the Vienna Cabinet had undoubtedly a strong case for putting forth energetic action and exacting substantial guarantees. Had it contented itself with thus redressing real grievances all Europe would have endorsed its claims and the war would have been postponed.

For Bosnia and Herzegovina, whose inhabitants are all Serbs by race and language, were honeycombed with disaffection. No outsider realized or even yet realizes the extent to which Austrian rule there was burrowed. During the exhaustive investigation into the origins of the crime of Sarajevo, the Central Governments learned with dismay that disaffection was rife everywhere. This sensational revelation was the only result of the inquiry, which was hidden from the public gaze, lest it should compromise the local authorities and discredit the administration in the eyes of the peoples.

But Austria had other interests besides her own to consider. Once more it had fallen to her lot to discharge the functions of "brilliant

second " to her ally. And this was her undoing.

So much depended on the reception which her demands would meet in Servia and Europe generally that the utmost care was bestowed on the wording of it. The task of drawing it up was confided to the Hungarian Premier, Count Tisza, partly on intrinsic grounds —this statesman having displayed a keen interest in foreign politics generally and in Balkan affairs in particular—and partly for political reasons, Austria being desirous of bestowing upon Hungary an active rôle in what was a fateful enterprise for both halves of the Monarchy. Before the text of the document was fixed, the results of the inquiry into the assassination were committed to writing, in the form of a *pièce justificative*, intended to bring the outside world into dynamic contact with what Austria brandmarked as a realm of assassins and anarchists. Hardly any mystery was made of the object which the demands were meant to attain. It was expected and intended that M. Pasitch would find it impossible to assent to the terms laid down, some of which could only be complied with by his treating the Constitution as a worthless scrap of paper. It was felt that if he yielded an indignant people would sweep away his Government, return a negative answer, and possibly inaugurate a saturnalia of anarchy, to which the Emperor Franz Josef's troops would put a speedy end.

Sir Maurice de Bunsen, the British Ambassador in Vienna, in one of his despatches, writes of this

ultimatum: "Its integral acceptance by Servia was neither expected nor desired, and when, on the following afternoon, it was at first rumoured in Vienna that it had been unconditionally accepted, there was a moment of keen disappointment." I was in Vienna at the time, and I know that that is a correct presentment of the facts.

A long period of anxious suspense had preceded the publication of the Note. In diplomatic circles curiosity became painfully intense. Every hint of what was coming was eagerly snatched up, commented, and transmitted to headquarters. Italian diplomacy, weighed down by a sense of heavy responsibility and intuitive apprehension of imminent danger, was treated to vague phrases about the heinous nature of the crime, the necessity of preventing its recurrence, and Austria's resolve to have her relations with the Slav kingdom placed on a new and stable basis. But beyond these generalities nothing concrete was submitted either to the Duke of Avarna in Vienna or to the Marquis di San Giuliano in Rome.

The Russian Ambassador in the Austrian capital was led to infer that no sweeping stroke would be dealt against Servia, and that the demands contemplated would be compatible with her integrity, independence, and honour. And he accordingly took a fortnight's leave of absence a few days before the Note was presented.

Very different was the attitude of the Austrian Government towards Germany, who was vigilantly watching for every new phase of the historic

transaction in order to subordinate the whole to her own vaster design. Nothing was kept back from the politicians of the Wilhelmstrasse but the rough draft of the Note. The German Ambassador, von Tschirschky, however, was one of the few who were initiated into that mystery. This, it must be confessed, was natural. For without the resolute backing of Germany the position taken up by Austria-Hungary would have been untenable. Congruously with this privileged position, Germany's representative, von Tschirschky, saw the proposed text of the ultimatum. Not that his advice on the subject was taken or solicited. His views were known in advance. But it was he who telegraphed the wording of the document to the Kaiser, who was then ostentatiously absent from Germany. I advance this statement with full knowledge of what actually took place. This communication was made not merely for the purpose of keeping the War Lord informed of what it behoved him to know, but also and mainly in order to secure his express assent to the set terms of an official paper which was intended to bring about hostilities between Austria and Servia, and might incidentally precipitate a European conflict.

Well, the rough draft as originally drawn up by Count Tisza did not obtain the Emperor's unconditional approval. The versatile monarch suggested a certain amendment to the wording and fixed the time-limit, the alleged object of which was to leave no room for evasion, no

loophole for escape. And as a matter of course the verbal modifications he proposed—I only know that their purpose was to sharpen (scharfmachen) the terms—were embodied in the ultimatum which, thus amended and sanctioned, was duly presented. I further had it on the same indisputable authority that the time-limit of forty-eight hours was the result of a proposal coming direct from Kaiser Wilhelm, who held that Servia must not be allowed to deliberate or to take counsel with Russia, but should be confronted with the necessity of giving a categorical answer at once. His own mode of action towards Russia and Belgium, to each of which States he allowed but twelve hours for deliberation, was conceived in the same spirit and prompted by a like calculation.

CHAPTER VI

THE POSITION OF ITALY

WHY this differential treatment as between Germany and Italy? one may ask. Both being Austria's allies, each might reasonably claim the same degree of confidence as the other. Whence, then, this one-sided distrust? To this query the answer came pat and plausible. There was no difference in the degrees of confidence displayed by Austria towards the Governments of her allies, no more information having been vouchsafed to one than to the other. To the Berlin Foreign Office was dealt out the same meed of intelligence as to the Consulta. Consequently there is no ground for complaint. The matter being a concern of Austria's, with no direct bearings on the Triple Alliance, was communicated to the other two members of the Alliance in exactly the same measure. And I have good grounds for believing that the *Berlin Foreign Office* did not receive directly from the Ballplatz in Vienna the text of the ultimatum to Servia. The Kaiser was the sole direct recipient.

None the less, Italy's position was necessarily shaped in part by Austria's failure to keep her

informed of a move which might entail a European war, and might, therefore, warrant a claim on her for her services as an active ally in that war. The Consulta argued that if Italy was deemed not to have a sufficient interest in a transaction which was calculated to lead to an armed conflict, neither could she be considered to have a corresponding interest in the upshot of that transaction. For the duties of an ally during war presuppose certain corresponding rights in peace, and foremost among these is her claim to be consulted, to offer advice, and to exercise a moderating influence. And as she was deprived of those rights, so she was *ipso facto* relieved of the corresponding duties. And to this line of reasoning there is no convincing answer. That, however, is but the formal aspect of Italy's justification of her neutrality. She can and does take her stand on higher ground. Bound to aid her allies only if these are attacked, she is under no obligation to co-operate with them in the field if they themselves are the aggressors. And as Austria and Germany deliberately provoked hostilities, they have no real claim on their ex-ally.

In France, and to a lesser extent in Great Britain, much—too much, to my thinking—has been written about the strong motives which appeal to King Victor Emanuel's Government to abandon its neutrality and throw in its lot with the Entente Powers. It was a deplorable blunder, we are told, on the part of the short-sighted statesmen of the Consulta

to have ever entered into partnership with the military States of Europe. Worse than this, it was an act of the blackest ingratitude towards France, and in a lesser degree towards Russia. But the belligerents of the Entente are generous, and Italy, if she repents and makes amends by joining hands with France and Great Britain before it is too late, will be magnanimously forgiven and lavishly rewarded. Unredeemed Italy —*Italia irredenta*—now under the Austrian yoke, will be presented to her at the close of hostilities. She may also take possession of Valona and supreme command of the Adriatic. But these rewards are for timely action. If she waits too long she will have waited in vain.

Exhortations of this kind are to be deprecated as mischievous. They are likely—if they produce any effect at all—to damage the cause which they are meant to further. Italy must be allowed to understand her own vital and secondary interests at least as well as the amateur diplomatists who so generously undertake to ascertain and promote them, and all of whom have an axe of their own to grind. In the eyes of the world, though not in those of her ex-allies, Germany and Austria, she has completely vindicated her right to hold aloof from her allies in a war of pure aggression, waged for the hegemony of the Teutonic race. But to pass from neutrality to belligerency, to treat the allies of yesterday as the enemies of to-day, without transition and without adequate provocation, would be in accordance

neither with the precepts of ethics nor the promptings of statesmanship.

The reproach hurled at Italy for her long copartnership with Austria and Germany appears to me to be unmerited. It was neither a foolish nor an ungrateful move. On the contrary, I feel, and have always felt, convinced that it was the act of an able statesman whose main merit in the matter was to discern its necessity and to turn that necessity into a work of apparent predilection. As a member of the Triple Alliance, Italy discharged a twofold function, national and international. She avoided a war against Austria-Hungary which, whatever the military and naval upshot, would have secured for her no advantages, political or territorial, and would have exhausted her resources financial and military. And in this way, while directly pursuing her own interests, she indirectly furthered those of all Europe. Even under the favourable conditions realized by her membership of the Alliance, it was no easy task to repress popular feeling against Austria. At one time, indeed, when Count Aehrenthal was Minister of Foreign Affairs in Vienna, an Austro-Italian war was on the point of breaking out. The late Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his protégé, Baron Conrad von Hoetzendorff, who was then, and is now, Chief of the General Staff, were strongly in favour of severing the links that bound the Habsburg Monarchy to Italy and delivering an ultimatum to the Consulta. Between their quarrel and overt

war stood a solitary individual, Count Aehrenthal, who had the courage of his opinion and refused to countenance the projected breach. His resignation or a pacific settlement were the alternatives which he laid before his sovereign, and this perspective, together with his lucid exposé of the sinister results of the proposed plunge, enlisted the aged Emperor on his side, and Baron Conrad von Hoetzendorff was gently removed—for a time—from the General Staff and appointed to a different post of trust.

Another function discharged by Italy while she retained her membership of the Alliance was purely international. She continued steadfastly to cultivate cordial relations with Great Britain, turning a deaf ear to the admonitions, exhortations, and blandishments of Berlin. No competent student of international politics who has watched the growth of Italy ever since she entered the Alliance, and has had the means of acquainting himself with the covert threats, overt seductions, and finely spun intrigues by which her fidelity to Great Britain was tested, will refuse to her statesmen the palm of European diplomacy or to her Government a sincere tribute for her steadfast loyalty to her British friends. Her policy during this chequered period has been a masterpiece of political wisdom and diplomatic deftness. In the Triple Alliance her influence was, and was intended to be, of a moderating character. It was thus that it was regarded by her statesmen and employed by her diplomatists. Whenever a quarrel

between one of her own allies and one of ours grew acute, Italy's endeavour was to compose it. She was at least as much averse to war as we were ourselves, and she cheerfully made heavy sacrifices to avert it. So long, therefore, as she was treated as a fully qualified member of the Alliance, we could feel assured that European peace had a powerful intercessor among its most dangerous enemies.

That is why, before the war, I always shared the view of the statesmen of the Consulta that Italy should do nothing calculated to sever her connection with Austria and Germany. I went further than this, and maintained that it was to our interest to support her diplomatically in the Near East and elsewhere, on the ground that the stronger she became the greater would her influence for peace grow, and the more valuable the services she could and would confer upon us without impairing her own interests.*

But by means of poisonous insinuations diplomatic and journalistic, the Wilhelmstrasse strove hard to sow suspicion and breed dissension between her and her western friends. It was, for instance, asserted by Germany that when last the Triple Alliance was prematurely renewed, the terms of the treaty had been extended, and an agreement respecting the sea-power of the allies in the Mediterranean had been concluded by all three. This was a

* One of my last articles on this subject appeared in the July issue of the *Contemporary Review*.

falsehood concocted presumably for the purpose of embroiling France, Russia, and Great Britain with Italy. Its effect upon Russia was certainly mischievous. And having ascertained from two of the allies that it was an invention, I publicly stigmatized it as such, and affirmed that the treaty had been signed without modification. And events have proved the accuracy of my information.

Another and much more insidious untruth, emanating from the same source and fabricated for a like purpose, turned upon the withdrawal of our warships from the Mediterranean, where our interests were confided to the care of the French navy. This disposition was, of course, taken with a view to the general sea-defences of Great Britain and France in case of an emergency such as that which has since had to be faced. It was certainly not directed against Italy, with whom our Government ne ther had nor expected to have any grounds for a quarrel. None the less, it supplied too attractive an occasion to be lost by the ever-ready Prussian, who made haste to use it in order to generate mistrust between Italy and her friends of the Entente. Sundry Italian diplomatists were initiated, in seemingly casual ways, into the "true meaning" of that "insidious" move. It was not directed against Germany and Austria, they were assured, but had Italy, and Italy alone, for its object. France, jealous of the growing power and prestige of Italy in the Midland Sea, had sought and obtained

Great Britain's assent to the concentration of France's warships there. This innovation constituted, and was meant to constitute, a warning to Italy to slacken her speed in the Midland Sea. And I was requested to make private representations to our Foreign Office, accompanied by a request that this unfriendly measure should be discontinued. My assurances that it contained neither a threat nor a warning to Italy were but wasted breath. Information of a "trustworthy" character had been obtained—it was not volunteered, and could not, therefore, be suspected—that the initiative had been taken by France, whose dominant motive was jealousy of Italy.

To my mind this misstatement, which derived the poison of its sting from the truly artful way in which it was conveyed through "a disinterested source," was one of the most mischievous of Prussian wiles. Italy was led to believe that the real design of the Republic was the establishment of French hegemony in the Mediterranean; that M. Poincaré, whose regrettable speech about the French steamers *Carthage* and *Manuba*, which had been detained by Italy during the Lybian campaign, stung Italians to the quick, was the promoter of the scheme, and that the shelving of M. Pichon, who was a friend of Italy's, was its corollary.

Italy was made to feel that France's attitude towards her was systematically semi-hostile. No one act, excepting the concentration of the French fleet in the Mediterranean, was deemed

radically serious, but the endless sequence of pin pricks was construed as evidence of a disposition which was as unfriendly as seemed compatible with neighbourly relations. Among these things, the protection of Italian religious communities in the East was taken by the Germans as the text for repeated diatribes against France for her unfriendly conduct towards her Latin sister. Atheistic France, it was sneeringly remarked, insists on protecting in the East the very communities which she has driven from her own territories in Europe, not because of the love she bears them, but by reason of her jealousy and hatred of Italy.

I remember one dispute of the kind which arose about the house of an Italian religious congregation in Tripoli of Syria. All the members save one being Italians, and having demanded the protection of their own Government, were entitled to have it, in virtue of a convention on the subject between France and Italy a few years before. The French Ambassador in Rome was anxious to have the question put off indefinitely, although at bottom there was no question at all, seeing that the case had been provided for. During the negociations and discussions that needlessly went on for fully two years, Germany lost no opportunity to rub France's unfriendliness into Italy's memory, and to prove that Italy's one natural ally is Austria-Hungary.

These things are of yesterday, and it needs some little time to deaden the recollection of them.

When the present war was on the point of breaking out, one of the first misstatements spread by the diplomacy of the two Prussianized allies was Italy's promise to co-operate with them against France, in return for the stipulated cession to her—as her share of the spoils of war—of Tunis, Savoy, and Nice. That this proposal was to have been made is certain. Whether the intention was actually carried out I am unable to say. But the archives of the French Foreign Office possess an interesting and trustworthy report on the subject, only one item of which is erroneous, to the effect that Italy had succumbed to the temptation.

Writing in the first half of June last on the subject of Italy's foreign policy, I expressed myself in the following terms :

The problems with which Italian statesmen have for several decades been grappling are uncommonly difficult and delicate. Probably no European Government has in recent times been confronted with a task so thorny as that with which the responsible advisers of the three kings of United Italy have had to deal. And the tact, resourcefulness, and suppleness with which they have achieved a set of results which theoretically seemed unattainable and incompatible with each other command the admiration of competent judges. Italy's foreign policy resembles nothing so much as one of those egg-dances which Pope Leo X. delighted to witness after his Lucullan banquets. And the deftness and rapidity with which the moves are made and steps taken that seem certain to crush

this egg or that, yet do no damage to any of them, are amazing. But unlike the papal dancers, the statesmen of the Consulta can look forward to no prize, to no popular applause. Abroad they are accused of double-dealing, and at home of pursuing a costly policy of adventure. France charges them with ingratitude and perfidy. In Great Britain they are sometimes set down as schemers. In Vienna they are mistrusted, while Berlin indulges in scepticism or holds its judgment in suspense. And to crown all, they are blamed or repudiated by a certain section of their own people, whose welfare they have been laboriously endeavouring to promote.

Italy's policy in its general lines has been imposed by circumstances and tempered by statesmanship. Far from embodying Utopian notions or manifesting herself in dubious ventures, she has kept well within the limits of the essential, the indispensable. By making common cause with the two military Powers of Central Europe and forming the Triple Alliance, she steered clear of a conflict with Austria-Hungary which, so far as one can discern, there was no other way of avoiding. Italian irredentism in the Dual Monarchy and the rivalry of the two States in the Adriatic had confronted them both with the dilemma of choosing between a formal alliance and open antagonism. The decision took the form of a bold move, but a necessary one. Italy's adherence to the League gave deep offence to France, and led to their estrangement, which was followed by several press campaigns and one damaging tariff war. And in spite of the subsequent reconciliation, the relations between the two Latin nations have never since been marked by genuine cordiality. The press of France and many eminent politicians

there resent it as a sort of racial treason that Italy should be bound by treaty to Germany and Austria-Hungary. Russia, who for a time cultivated a close friendship with the Italian people, was surprised and pained by the seemingly needless and ostentatious renewal of the Triple Alliance in the year 1912, a twelvemonth before it had terminated. Even British publicists have found much to condemn in the attitude of the Italian Government during the Balkan war and down to the present moment. During all this time the cultivation of rudimentary neighbourliness, to say nothing of friendship between the Italian and the Austrian peoples as distinguished from their Governments, has been for the statesmen of both countries, and in particular for those of Rome, a work of infinite care, ingenious expedients, and painful self-discipline, openly deprecated by an influential section of the Italian press.

The alpha and omega of Italy's foreign policy in the present is the maintenance of her actual position in the Mediterranean, and in the future the season able improvement of that position, and in every case the prevention of a shifting of the equilibrium such as would alter it to her disadvantage. To attain these objects is an essential condition of Italy's national existence, and calls for the constant exercise of vigilance and caution alternating with push and daring by her responsible rulers. It behoves her, therefore, to be well affected towards France, friendly with Austria, amicable with Great Britain, to hold fast to the Triple Alliance, and to give no cause for umbrage to the Triple Entente. In a word, it is the prestidigitation of statesmanship. And her diplomacy has acquitted itself well of the task. The sum of the efforts of successive Governments has been to raise Italy to a unique position

in Europe, to make her a link between the two riva groups of Powers, to one of which she herself belongs, to bestow upon her the second place in the Triple Alliance, and to invest her with enormous influence for peace in the councils of Europe. To grudge her this influence, which has been uniformly exerted for the best interests of Europe and her own, implies imperfect acquaintance with those interests or else a leaning towards militarism. Every development which tends to strengthen Italy, diplomatically and politically, tends also to augment the safeguards of public peace and to lessen the chances of a European conflict. On these grounds, therefore, were there none other, a violent domestic reaction against the policy that has scored such brilliant results would be an international calamity. Happily, there is good hope that the bulk of the nation is wiser and also stronger than the section which is answerable for, and in secret sympathy with, the recent excesses.*

As the Mediterranean State *par excellence*, Italy cannot contemplate the present distribution of power on the shores of that sea with genuine complacency. The grounds for dissatisfaction are rooted in the history of her past and in her apprehensions for the future. None the less, the *status quo* in Europe being hallowed must be respected under heavy pains and penalties. And the policy of the Consulta is directed to its maintenance, because any modification of it in favour of another State, great or small, would infallibly drive Italy out of her quiescence and strain her to press with all her energies and at all risks in the direction of a favourable readjustment. That is why seventeen years

* The general strike, accompanied in places by riots, a few months ago.

ago the Austrian and the Italian Foreign Secretaries concluded the so-called *noli me tangere* Convention, by which each of the two allies undertook to abstain from meddling with Albania, to uphold Turkish rule there, and, failing that, to establish self-government. It was in virtue of the same principle that during the Balkan war Italy supported Austria-Hungary in frustrating Servia's attempt to divide up Albania among the allies and obtain for herself access to the Adriatic. As long as the Adriatic continues to present the same essential factors as to-day, the Italian Government will not swerve from its present attitude. But if once those factors or their relative positions towards each other underwent a change, the whole scaffolding of self-denial and everything that rested upon that would fall to pieces like a house of cards. And that scaffolding supports the peace of Europe.

On her Eastern shore Italy possesses no port capable of serving as a thoroughly suitable base for naval operations. Brindisi is at best a mere makeshift; Venice is no better. Italy's rival, Austria, on the other hand, is luckier. Cattaro, Sebenico, and Pola serve the purpose admirably, giving the Austrian navy a distinct advantage in this respect. It must, therefore, be gall and wormwood to Italian politicians to think that an ideal port, Valona, on the Albanian coast, a few hours from Italy, lies unutilized because each State grudges it to the other on grounds which cannot be reasoned away. Valona, incorporated in the Habsburg Monarchy, which is already so well equipped on the Adriatic both for defence and attack, would turn the scale against Italy, upset the equilibrium which is at present accepted as a stern necessity, and might even unchain the forces of war. The prospect of kindred

eventualities forbids Austria to allow that magnificent naval base to fall into the hands of her rival, who, holding the key to the Adriatic, could close the Otranto Canal and immobilize the fleet of the Dual Monarchy.

It would be unfair, therefore, to contend that the mainspring of Italy's seemingly anti-Slav policy is racial bitterness or political narrow-mindedness. A natural instinct of self-preservation underlies it which neither argument nor sentiment can affect. Her present wish and the object of her endeavours is to enable Albania to maintain her independence and to keep the equilibrium in the Adriatic intact. And it is sheer inconceivable that any Italian Government should deviate from this line of action. . . .

It is entirely misleading, therefore, to assert that Italy's alliance with the two military Powers of Central Europe is the result of eclectic affinities or to fancy that by cajolery or threats she can be moved to sever the links that bind her to the concern. I entertain not the slightest doubt that the French Ambassador in Rome, M. Barère, whose infinite patience and marvellous tact drew France and Italy very close together for a while, would be the first to recognize that the breaking-up of the Triple Alliance is a hopeless enterprise, and an aim of questionable utility from any point of view. Outsiders, whose opinions are moulded by the daily press, may be excused for thinking otherwise. The renewal of the treaty in the year 1912, a full year before its expiry, has been uniformly construed as an indication of Italy's resolve to emphasize her friendship with her allies, and this interpretation appeared to be borne out by a number of concomitant circumstances and in particular by the comments of the European press. It was likewise

assumed that at the same time the Treaty was supplemented by a naval convention turning upon the future action of the Triple Alliance in the Mediterranean. I investigated these reports in Rome and elsewhere, and I received convincing evidence that they were both equally groundless. No new clause touching the naval forces of the Alliance, or indeed dealing with anything else, was added to the Treaty. It was renewed as it stood. And the early date at which it was signed was credibly explained to me as the outcome of a legitimate eagerness on the part of Italy to see reaffirmed by Austria-Hungary the *noli me tangere* Convention which acted as a bar to encroachments, territorial or other, on Albania.

Between France and Italy the cordiality established mainly by the exertions of M. Barère has of late years undergone a marked change, and while the two Governments were endeavouring to smooth over their differences and deal amicably with each contentious matter as it cropped up, the press of each country was bombarding the other with taunts and reproaches which rendered the task of diplomacy unnecessarily difficult. And British publicists, for reasons which lie near the surface, felt inclined to take sides with their French colleagues, without perhaps investigating with sufficient closeness and care the origin of the estrangement. Those unfriendly utterances, some of them the effects of mere misunderstandings, run through contemporary poli tical history like a red thread through a piece of white cambric.

Italy's solicitude for friendship with France and Great Britain is prompted by interest as well as sentiment. For she sorely needs peace, recognizes the need, and is exerting herself to the utmost to

insure it. And this indisputable fact might profitably serve as the starting-point of one's reasoning on the subject, and likewise as a safe basis for the attitude of the statesmen interested. For a long time, it is true, the occupation of Tunis by France in 1887 was resented by every public man in the Peninsula. The ensuing tension was accentuated as much by the manner as by the policy of Crispi. The Abyssinian campaign made matters worse, seeing that the Abyssinians were believed to have received their arms and ammunition from the French. During all those untoward incidents, Great Britain was found on Italy's side. The Franco-Italian war of tariffs raised mutual animosity to its highest power, after which a reaction set in which led to the conclusion of the Mediterranean agreements with France and England.

During the Lybian war Italy seized two French steamers, the *Manuba* and the *Carthage*, for alleged contravention of international law, and sent them to Cagliari. France protested, and M. Poincaré took up such a decided position in the matter and gave it such vehement expression that all Italy was unanimous in holding him as the destroyer of the good relations laboriously established by M. Barère and the Consulta. And the affront has not yet been forgotten. The next grievance had its source in the action of the British Government, which confided to France the protection of her Mediterranean interests, and encouraged the Republic to keep the bulk of its warships in that sea. This preponderance of the French fleet in Italy's own sea was regarded by the Government of the Peninsula as an unfriendly act, owing to its special bearings on their relative naval strength there. And the author of this obnoxious innovation was believed to be the

Republic, which had induced Great Britain to acquiesce.

Lately Italy asked for an economic opening in Asia Minor, into which every Great Power of Europe was penetrating. That the demand was not unreasonable is shown by the fact that it has since been complied with. In view of that contingency, therefore, it would have been well to examine it without bias, instead of opposing it with vehemence. For Great Britain is no longer the most puissant State in the Midland Sea, and circumstances may one day arise in which she will be in want of an ally there. And Italy is her most natural partner. The circumstances that she is a member of the Triple Alliance is no bar to this prospective co-operation. For the Triple Alliance is a defensive combination. It provides for a certain well-defined eventuality, but outside that sphere Italy is untrammelled.

The pith of the matter, then, is that British and French publicists are wont to lay undue stress on Italy's alliance with Germany and Austria-Hungary. That engagement is but a single facet of her activity. There are others more enduring. She is obliged to protect her special interests and is also free to cultivate her special friendships. Paramount among those interests is the maintenance of peace, and chief of those friendships is that with Great Britain and France. Even the Triple Alliance was founded as an association for the prevention of war, and hitherto it has not drifted into aggression. Italy's influence in that concern is growing, and together with it her facilities for upholding the pacific policy with which she has uniformly identified herself. And the more steadily her economic well-being and her political prestige develop, the greater will be

the weight which as second member of the Alliance she can throw into the scale of peace.*

Italy occupies a unique position in the polity of Continental Europe. Whereas all other Great Powers owe much of what they have and are to successful wars, Italy is indebted for her rapid progress and growth chiefly to the arts of peace and the triumphs of diplomacy. And as she is an essentially pacific and cultured State, whose policy is inspired solely by national interests, it stands to reason that her statesmen will take heed not to endanger what she already possesses and what she may reasonably hope for in the future by any hasty move, and least of all by impulsively exchanging peace for war. In plain English, she will be guided by events, and it would be mere childishness to expect to see her rush into the arena, moved by a sudden outburst of sentimentality. And as yet the national interest is not deemed to have become a decisive motive. For this reason the importunity of her ex-allies is more likely to damage than help the cause in which it is employed. The Teutonic belligerents, too, are wasting their breath when they hold out the annexation of Tunis, Savoy, and Nice as the price of her co-operation, just as the Entente Powers would be doing were they to endeavour to entice her to their side by dangling maps of *Italia irredenta* and Valona before her eyes. Italian statesmen may be trusted to gauge the situation

* *Contemporary Review*, July, 1914, p. 122-128.

aright, and when the upshot of the mighty struggle can be forecast, to make no miscalculation. They may also be credited with decision enough to take their final stand in good time. But above all else, it should be borne in mind that Italy will be guided solely by the promptings of her national interests. She will hardly consider these sufficiently guaranteed by a scrap of paper, and still less by a German promise of one.

Respecting one important consideration Italian statesmen will hardly be content to suspend their judgment or to cherish illusions. However satisfied in mind they may be that their neutrality was warranted by the aggression of their German and Austrian allies, they cannot ignore the contrary thesis which is firmly held by every thinking German and Austrian in the two Empires. The Kaiser, his Chancellor, the Evangelical theologians, the men of letters of the Fatherland, Count Bernstorff in Washington, all hold that Germany and Austria are but defending themselves against unprincipled aggression. And the corollary of this declaration is that Italy is guilty of the monstrous crime of regarding her treaty obligations as a worthless scrap of paper. For the moment impunity is the result of powerlessness to punish the criminal, and will continue only as long as its cause is operative.

That this and other equally momentous aspects of the thorny problem are receiving due consideration may be taken for granted.

CHAPTER VII

THE TWELFTH HOUR

ALTHOUGH the Austrian ultimatum to Servia was so worded and the time accorded for a reply so limited as to ensure its rejection, misgivings were, as we saw, felt and uttered in Vienna and Budapest that Servia would knuckle down and execute the humiliating behests of the Ballplatz. For this was a consummation which was deemed highly undesirable. The carefully laid plan would have become difficult of realization had Austria's terms been acquiesced in unreservedly. It would have rendered a military expedition superfluous and left Servia's army intact. Hence the exhaustive precautions adopted for the purpose of provoking a negative answer to the ultimatum from Belgrade.

On July 23rd, while the Franco-Russian festivities were at their height, and M. Poincaré and the Tsar were announcing to the world their ultra-pacific strivings, the bolt fell from the blue. What will Russia say ? people asked in Western Europe. Well, the Russian Foreign Office, as we now know, was informed by Austria of the

text of the Note *only seventeen hours after it had been presented, and only thirty-one hours before the time limit had lapsed!* The little case thus made of Russia by the Teutonic allies was meant to be clearly conveyed by this studied affront. It had been decided in Berlin and Vienna that Russia must and would remain passive.

Delay was the only danger apprehended in Vienna, and nothing was left undone to prevent its occurrence. M. Pasitch, the Servian Premier, who appears to have had an intuition of what was brewing, let it be known before the Austrian Note was presented that he was absent from Belgrade and was going abroad. His substitute was nominated. But in Vienna they were on the alert, and M. Pasitch received from that city an urgent telegram notifying him that the representations which the Austro-Hungarian Government were drawing up would be delivered in Belgrade almost immediately, and that their tenor was such as to necessitate his presence in the capital. Thereupon the Premier hastened back to Belgrade.

From the first inception of the Austro-German plan of concerted action, the parts of each of the actors were assigned. Servia was to be stung into utterances or action which would warrant resort to an Austrian punitive expedition, but before this Russia was to be warned that if she aided or abetted her protégé and issued a mobilization order against Austria, a countermove would at once be made by Germany, who

would mobilize, not as a demonstration, but for war. This warning was to serve as an efficacious deterrent. If Russia, it was argued, can be got to realize that even partial mobilization on her part will provoke not merely general mobilization by Austria, but war with Germany and with Austria-Hungary, her zeal for the Southern Slavs will be damped, and she will entrench herself behind diplomatic formulas. This conviction was deep-rooted. It formed one of the postulates of the Austro-German scheme. Evidences of it are to be met with everywhere. But by way of making quite sure, private letters were written by Continental statesmen to their friends in the interested Governments—letters like that which the Kaiser himself once penned to Lord Tweedmouth—impressing upon them the gravity of the situation, and adjuring them to realize that this time Austria and Germany were playing no mere game of bluff, but were in downright earnest, and that if peace was to be maintained at all, it could only be by inducing Russia to forego mobilization.

That, too, was the burden of many of my own messages to the *Daily Telegraph*, beginning with the very first. Thus on July 28th I telegraphed :

> The moment Russia mobilizes against the Dual Monarchy, the German Empire as well as Austria-Hungary will respond, and then the object of these military operations will be pursued to the bitter end, with the results so clearly foreseen and so graphically described by Sir Edward Grey in his proposals.

In the interests of European peace, therefore, which can still be safeguarded, in spite of the hostilities now going ahead, it is essential that every means of friendly pressure should be thoroughly exhausted before a provocative measure such as mobilization is resorted to. For mobilization by Russia, Germany, and Austria will connote the outbreak of the long-feared general Continental war.

In the assumption that Russia would be partly intimidated and partly talked over by her French allies and English friends as soon as these learned what tremendous issues hung in the balance, the two Teutonic Governments laid it down from the start that no Power would be permitted to intervene between Austria and Servia in any shape or form. These two States must compose or fight out their quarrel as best they could without the good offices or advice of any foreign Government. "No discussion will be allowed," I accordingly telegraphed; "no extension of time will be granted." All these limitations were elements of the pressure brought to bear upon Russia directly through her friends and ally. I sought to make this clear in one of my messages to the *Daily Telegraph,* in which I wrote:

Meanwhile, Austria's allies have taken their stand, which is favourable to the action of this Government and to the employment of all the available means to localize the eventual conflict. It is further assumed that Great Britain will, if hostilities should result, hold aloof, and that France will make her

influence felt in preventing rather than waiting to localize the struggle.*

But Russia needed no deterrents, if Austria's ostensible aim were her real one, if she were bent only on obtaining guarantees for Servia's good behaviour in future. For the Tsardom was peaceably disposed and extremely averse to war. M. Sazonoff's attitude was straightforward and considerate. He showed thorough understanding for Austria's grievances and reasonable claims. He had no intention of jeopardizing peace by screening Servia or rescuing her from the consequences of her misbehaviour. King Peter's Cabinet accordingly received sound advice from the Tsar's Government. And what was more to the point, they adopted it.

During the second day of the time-limit in Vienna and Budapest it was feared that Servia would give in. M. Jovanovitch, the Servian Minister, hinted as much, and when one reads Servia's reply one cannot fairly reproach him with overstating the gist of it. For it was acceptance of all those demands which were compatible with independence. But then independence was precisely what Austria was minded to take away. And the reserves and provisoes made by the Servian Note for the purpose of safeguarding it determined the departure of Baron von Giesl from Belgrade. Characteristic of the fixed resolve of the Teutonic States to

* *Daily Telegraph*, July 25th, 1914.

force a quarrel upon Servia at all costs and irrespective of her reply to the Austrian Note is the circumstance, vouched for by the Russian press, that within forty minutes of the delivery of that reply, which was a lengthy document, the Austrian Minister in Belgrade had read and rejected it, had removed his luggage and that of his staff from the Legation to the railway station, and was seated in the train that was to convey him out of Servia. Forty minutes!

It is not easy for Western minds, accustomed to truth, honour, and self-respect, to realize how all the usages of international intercourse were thus set at naught during this first stage of the European conflict. Words and forms were employed to mislead. Servia's answer was wanted only as providing a plausible pretext for the resort to force, which had been decided on from the first. And I was informed—although I must in fairness add that I had no tangible evidence for the assertion, nothing but a strong presumption—that even if M. Pasitch, violating the Constitution of his country, had undertaken to carry out all Austria's behests unreservedly, and if no internal troubles had resulted from this subservience, the Austrian troops massed on the Servian frontiers would not have been baulked of their prey. Another demand was held in reserve which Servia could not and would not comply with, and her refusal would have afforded the wished-for ground for invasion.

In any and every case, Servia was to have been

entered by Austrian troops. That seems to have been a settled and irrevocable resolve. And all the diplomatic notes, conversations, and reports, which Sir Edward Grey, M. Viviani, and M. Sazonoff treated as excusable manifestations of fiercely burning anger, were but cunningly devised expedients to sting the Belgrade Cabinet into some word or act that might serve to justify this set plan. The plan was not at first suspected by the Entente Powers, nor was it fully understood for some time even after its existence had been discovered. It was, as we saw, twofold. First, the "punishment" of the army by the forces of the Dual Monarchy, and of the nation by the levy of a crushing war indemnity, and of the economic energies of the country by the imposition of a commercial treaty which was to lay Servia permanently at the mercy of her powerful navy. And, second, the partition of the newly annexed territories among Servia's neighbours and the establishment of a Balkan League under the ægis of the Habsburgs. The machinery for bringing about this latter object was in full movement at the very time that the British, French, and Russian Governments were basing their moderation and self-containment on Austria's voluntary undertaking not to *annex* any portion of Servian territory. Here, again, was a case of juggling with phrases which the Chancelleries of the Entente Powers were taking at their face value. Pressure was even then being put upon Turkey, Bulgaria, and Greece to assist

in this underhand scheme, and reliance was being placed in the Hohenzollern King Carol, who would, it was assumed, make full use of his authority to hinder Roumania from taking sides against Austria-Hungary. The Treaty of Bucharest was to be proclaimed a scrap of waste paper.

Had the Governments of the Entente realized the impossibilities that beset them when zealously endeavouring to hit upon a formula which would have satisfied Vienna and insured the quiescence of St. Petersburg, they would unquestionably have bent their efforts in quite other directions. But this vital aspect of the matter lay hidden from their vision. They were further imposed upon by Germany's evident anxiety that the war area should be restricted to Servian territory. Indeed, one of the most caustic ironies of the crisis lay in the eager co-operation of the Entente Powers with Germany for what they all termed the peace of Europe, but which the Teutonic States knew to be the smooth execution of their own sinister designs. The combined moral pressure of all Europe was accordingly brought to bear upon Russia to oblige or constrain her to passivity for the sake of the general peace.

And it must be confessed that the Tsar's Ministers came up to the highest expectations conceived of them. Defence, not offence, was their watchword. They would follow the lead of their future adversaries and content themselves with parrying their thrusts. M. Sazonoff's first

step, although he may have foreseen the coming hurricane, was to ask for an extension of the time-limit. "If you want to localize the quarrel," he argued, "you must adopt suitable measures. You say that our co-operation is essential. Well, we are willing to accord it. Let us get to work at once. Some of your demands involve a change in the Servian Constitution. No Minister and no Cabinet can accomplish this without a law passed by the Legislature. And this cannot be done in a few hours. But give Servia a few days to turn your demands over in her mind, and give us time to advise and to urge her to prudence and compromise." Now if, as France and Great Britain assumed, Austria wanted only to punish Servia for her past attitude and obtain guarantees of future good behaviour, she would have complied with this common-sense request. But as that was not her entire plan, she refused, congruously with her preliminary arrangement with the German Kaiser, and relying on the axiom that Russia would not fight.

This negative answer disclosed the fact that the two allies' plans went further than had been assumed. Thereupon the Tsar's Government issued orders countermanding the manœuvres, promoting officers, summarily terminating the camp gatherings, prohibiting aviation over the frontiers, and proclaiming the two capitals in a state of "extraordinary protection." Notwithstanding, or by reason of this, Berlin put in a plea that she should not be confounded with

Vienna. " It was not we who sent the ultimatum. Neither did we know the text of it. That was Austria's handiwork, and, what is more to the point, she has acted at her own risk and peril. Please bear that in mind." " We certainly will. But are we to take it that, having acted at her own risk and peril, Austria is proceeding alone ? " " Ah, well, she is our ally, you know, and we are bound to second her demands and stand by her to the end." " Well, will you exercise an ally's right and counsel her to postpone military operations until Europe has had time to secure for her ample satisfaction." " No, we do not see our way to comply with this request." That was Germany's mode of speech and action. Thereupon Russia introduced a modification of the law of military conscription in so far as it deals with officers of the reserve and the militia. The practical result of this innovation was to facilitate mobilization should that measure be subsequently resorted to.

Soon after the expiry of the time-limit Austria declared war on the realm of King Peter. M. Sazonoff, having from the start defined his country's position in the words, " Russia cannot adopt an attitude of unconcern in a struggle between Austria-Hungary and Servia," continued to give striking proofs of the Tsar's will to save Europe from a general war. Sir Edward Grey had offered to get satisfaction for the Dual Monarchy through the Powers, and he would have accomplished his purpose without a doubt.

But Austria was bent on getting something more than satisfaction for herself and for Germany in spite of Russia, whom she stigmatized as the mischief-maker. Hence all the heavy guns of European diplomacy were levelled against the Tsardom, while the St. Petersburg Foreign Office went beyond the Hercules' pillars of conciliation. Not only had Russia induced Servia to consent to terms which were onerous and humiliating, but the Russian Ambassador in Vienna said it was probable that his Government would, if properly approached, *go still further*.* Our own Ambassador in that capital assured his chief that he had gathered that Russia "*would go a long way to meet Austrian demands on Servia.*"† M. Sazonoff did not stop even here. He was careful to explain that mobilization should be envisaged as what it really was, namely, a mere intimation that Russia must be consulted regarding the fate of Servia, not as a threat of war.‡

The German Kaiser, celebrating the 200th anniversary of the Kingdom of Prussia, had laid down the principle that "in this world nothing must be settled without the intervention of Germany and of the German Emperor," yet the fate of a Slav State, which Russia had, so to say, created and watched over and protected, was about to be decided without her consent, nay,

* Cf. Sir M. de Bunsen's Despatch, July 29th, to Sir Edward Grey, with White Paper.

† Ibidem.

‡ Cf. White Paper. Sir M. de Bunsen's Despatch, July 30th.

without her knowledge. Russia was to be ostentatiously ignored and the Balkan States to be impressed by the fact that she was worse than powerless as a friend. That the Tsar's Government, however ready for compromise, would not brook this deadly affront was manifest to all excepting those who had settled it to their own satisfaction that she was too helpless to move. And the two Teutonic allies were of this opinion. That is why their answers to Russia's demands for a conference, or at any rate for an exchange of views, were not only negative in substance, but wantonly insolent in form. All that M. Sazonoff demanded was an assurance that Servia would not be utterly crushed. It was refused. He would, he said, understand that Austria-Hungary is compelled to exact from Servia measures which will secure her Slav provinces from the continuance of hostile propaganda from Servian territory.* And that was what every statesman in Europe was also saying. If Austria's demands had been, as they seemed, inspired by a legitimate desire to safeguard herself from a real Servian danger, the undertakings of Servia and Russia ought to have afforded her a broad enough basis for a pacific settlement. But all these colloquies, assurances, and claims were but the screen behind which a huge anti-European conspiracy was being hatched. And as yet the truth had not dawned on the statesmen of the Entente, who, still hypnotized by the crime of

* White Paper. Sir M. de Bunsen's Despatch, July 30th.

Sarajevo, were honestly working to obtain amends and guarantees for Austria-Hungary and ward off the growing peril of a general war.

Germany, ever alert and watchful, was the first to note that Russia's attitude differed from what it should be according to programme. She did not appear disposed to take with resignation the humiliation devised for her. She declared that she would not be indifferent to a conflict between Austria and Servia. She demanded a hearing in the councils of those who arrogated to themselves the right of life and death over her Slav protégé. As soon as this discrepancy between the actual and the expected became evident, the Berlin Government, which had made provision for this eventuality, commenced elaborate preparations against Russia, particularly in the Finnish Gulf. And as is the wont of Prussia, these preparations were secret. But the Russian authorities got wind of them, and apprized our Ambassador in St. Petersburg of what was taking place.*

Russia's spirited determination, coupled with her dignified conciliatory disposition, caused painful heartburnings in Vienna. It constituted the first hitch in the official programme. What was the good of having agents in St. Petersburg, who supplied exact copies of State papers and faithful narratives of private conversations, if

* See White Paper. Despatch sent by Sir G. Buchanan, July 30th.

the legitimate deductions from these data were upset at the very outset ?

To me, who witnessed the gradual breaking in of this painful light on the systematic mind of Teutonic diplomacy, there was something intensely ludicrous in the tragic spirit in which it was received. Could nothing, it was asked, be done to keep Russia in bounds ? Was France fully alive to the issues which Russia's intervention would raise ? Where was the love of peace so lately and so loudly professed by the Tsar and M. Poincaré ?

I had not the faintest doubt as to how Russia would behave under the provocation to which she was being subjected by the Teutonic States. There are some considerations of an altruistic nature which nations, like individuals, set above their own vital interests—considerations that engage all that is deepest and noblest in their feelings, that fire their imagination and call forth all the energies of their will. And the fate of the little Servian nation was one of these causes. To the Russian the Slav cause is much more than a political interest : it is a religious cult. But for such altruistic heroisms the Prussianized German has no sense. To him it is the fourth emotional dimension. On July 30th I despatched the following telegram to the *Daily Telegraph*, which I afterwards discovered was not transmitted :

It would be a delusion to suppose that Russia will

keep the peace while Servia is undergoing punishment that would reduce her to the rank of a semi-vassal State, and it would be a piece of still greater self-deception to imagine that Germany will not raise her army to its war-footing once the mobilization order has been issued in St. Petersburg, or will not use that army to the full when it is in the field. And as Austria-Hungary is resolved to have her way with Servia, and to refuse to render account of her action to any other Power, one is forced to the conclusion that the only possible solution to the present crisis is the much-dreaded European war. It is for that tremendous struggle that the Great Powers, and possibly one or other of the smaller ones, must now make ready.

On July 30th the meek, insignificant figure of the German Ambassador, Count Pourtalès, his head sheepishly bent down on his left shoulder, passed through the spacious apartments of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. After a brief talk with M. Sazonoff he became aware that the Rubicon was about to be passed, whereupon, as our Ambassador to the Tsar puts it, "he completely broke down. He appealed to M. Sazonoff to make some suggestion which he would telegraph to the German Government as a last hope." For he, too, was aware that Russia's entrance into the arena was an item which the Berlin wire-pullers had no wish to add to their compact little programme. To this appeal the Tsar's Minister gave a ready and conciliatory reply: "If Austria," he said, "recognizing that her conflict with Servia has assumed the character

of a question of European interest, declares herself ready to eliminate from her ultimatum those points which run counter to the principle of Servia's sovereignty, Russia engages to stop all military preparations."

That proposal was fair and moderate from every point of view but one. And that one was the Austro-German plot, which it was calculated to thwart.

As yet Russia's mobilization was but partial.

This consummation the Berlin authorities, and still more those of Vienna and Budapest, were straining every nerve to prevent. Even at this twelfth hour, when every lever had been moved in vain to eliminate Russia, a last expedient suggested itself to the resourceful minds of the plotters. Could not Great Britain be induced to throw her weight in the scale of the "peace-makers," or, at any rate, to withdraw it from the scale of the would-be belligerents? All she had to do was to make a formal declaration without further delay that, pipe how the allies might, she would refuse to take part in the war-dance. The London Foreign Office has peace and war in its hands, they urged. If Sir Edward Grey's professions are sincere, now is the moment to act up to them. Let him declare that he will not support Russia or France if these Powers persist in forcing Germany and Austria into war, and the situation will be eased at once. We here in Germany and Austria know that Britain will keep aloof, but Russia and particularly France

think differently. If they were warned in time, all might yet be right and the war would be localized. And various original expedients were discussed for having the matter brought before his Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. I, too, was asked for my opinion and suggestions. I uttered the former in words which I at once made public. I stated that the British Government was sincerely anxious to see peace speedily re-established in the Balkans and safeguarded throughout Europe ; that his Majesty's Government had done and still were engaged in doing everything calculated to achieve these ends ; that their hands were perfectly free and would remain free so long as they could continue to discharge the functions of peace-maker ; and that if, contrary to their hope and expectation, that task should become impossible, their action would be determined by eventualities upon which, as they still lay in the region of conjecture, it would be premature to speculate.

That neutrality was and would remain Great Britain's card was for long taken for granted. It was the last illusion to vanish.

It is worth noting that the pressure which Germany and Austria sought to exert on the British Government in order to elicit a declaration of neutrality, less as a policy—that being taken for granted—than as a means of influencing Russia and France, seemed equally desirable to the Tsar's Government for the purpose of obtaining a promise of naval and military

support, and thus deterring the two military States from their subversive designs. Thus M. Sazonoff urged our Government to show their hand in this way. But Sir George Buchanan replied that it would be a mistake to think " that the cause of peace could be promoted by our telling the German Government that they would have to deal with us as well as with Russia and France if they supported Austria by force of arms. Their attitude would merely be stiffened by such a menace, and we could only induce her to use her influence at Vienna to avert war by approaching her in the capacity of a friend who was anxious to preserve peace. His Excellency must not, if our efforts were to be successful, do anything to precipitate a conflict. In these circumstances I trusted that the Russian Government would defer the mobilization ukase as long as possible, and that troops would not be allowed to cross the frontier even when it was issued."*

That was a statesmanlike view, and, coupled with the earnest request made by our Government to M. Sazonoff that he would have mobilization delayed as long as possible, it affords signal proof that Great Britain marched perseveringly and with steadfast tread along the road that led to peace, and strenuously exerted herself to draw all other Powers after her. That is the answer to the allegations now made by the German Government and its organs that Great Britain

* White Paper. Despatch sent by the British Ambassador in St. Petersburg, dated July 27th.

provoked the war. Sir Edward Grey's exertions to hinder the collision were strenuous and persistent. They failed, and could not but fail, seeing that Austria and Germany had bound themselves to carry out a set aggressive plan, and were not open either to argument or suasion, The sole difference between the two was that Austria-Hungary relied upon Russia's quiescence and was willing to reconsider her attitude if that condition were not realized, whereas Germany, while also acting on the same assumption, had made ample provision for error, and was not to be turned from her scheme even if Russia entered the lists. "The conviction had been expressed to me by the German Ambassador on July 24th," writes Sir M. de Bunsen from Vienna, "that Russia would stand aside. This feeling, which was also held at the Ballplatz, influenced, no doubt, the course of events."

Adopting the moderating counsel tendered by the British Government, Russia at first proceeded only to partial mobilization. But as even that legitimate measure of self-defence had been prohibited—there is no more fitting term to suit the mode in which the veto had been uttered—by Germany, the Russian Ambassador, as soon as he heard of it, packed up his belongings and prepared to quit Vienna. He then learned, however, to his surprise, that the resources of diplomacy were not yet deemed to be exhausted, and he resumed conversations with Count Berchtold and Baron Macchio. On the same day I

was apprized that certain Russian lighthouses on the Black Sea had been ordered to put out their lights, and that the Stock Exchange was closed for three days.

France's behaviour during this rising tide of Teutonic aggression testified to her settled resolve to avoid every measure of precaution which might supply Germany with a pretext for diplomatic protest or military aggression. Nor did she hesitate to sacrifice those initial advantages which might be secured by such preliminary steps as all nations menaced by war are wont to adopt. The War Office withdrew their advance-posts to a distance of ten kilometres from the frontier, and the local population were thus abandoned to the attack of the German army. To my mind this is one of the most conclusive proofs of the self-containment and pacific mood of the Entente Powers. Great Britain sternly refusing to offer the slenderest encouragement to either of her friends, and straining their forbearance to its uttermost limits by demanding heavy strategical sacrifices of each in the cause of conciliation ; Russia holding her hand, contented to follow Germany's moves feebly and at intervals, and falling in with every suggestion made in the interests of peace, however it might jar with her sentiments or clash with her general policy ; and France drawing away her troops from the threatened frontiers while Germany was mobilizing—these eloquent facts supply the most complete answer to the questions who wanted and who began the war.

"The Government," M. Viviani explained, "wishes to make it clear that in no case will France be the aggressor." And the Government of the Republic made this abundantly clear.

Germany took a different view of her rights and duties. On July 30th her advance-posts were moved forward to the French frontiers. The 16th Corps from Metz and part of another corps from Treves and Cologne occupied the frontier at Metz. Reservists were on their way to Germany by tens of thousands, yet France abstained from summoning a single recruit. The next move was also made by Berlin: all Germany was proclaimed to be in a "state of war," the Crown Prince was appointed Commander of the First Division of the Guards. Then, and only then, did Russia issue the order for general mobilization. But even then she mollified the effect of this precaution by announcing that it was not a signal for war, but merely an intimation that her voice, too, must be heard in deciding the fate of Servia. At the same time passenger traffic on the railways was reduced, goods traffic suspended altogether, and Finland and the province of Petersburg were declared in a state of siege.

This news came to Vienna, in a distorted form, through the Prussian capital. It was affirmed that the Tsar and also M. Sazonoff had broken their solemn promise not to mobilize during the endeavours which the Kaiser was making to

coax Austria into a more pliant mood. This statement was, like so many others that emanated from the same source, at variance with facts and intended to mislead. Without the knowledge of those facts I at once recorded my absolute conviction that this was a venomous calumny against M. Sazonoff and his sovereign. We now know that what the Tsar actually wrote to the Kaiser was this :

It is technically impossible to discontinue our military operations, which are rendered necessary by Austria's mobilization. We are far from wishing for war, and so long as the negociations with Austria regarding Servia continue, my troops will not undertake any provocative action. I give thee my word upon it.

That is a very different thing from an undertaking not to mobilize. And as for the Kaiser coaxing his ally into a compliant mood, he and his Ministers were stiffening her obstinacy, and when she did finally give way, far from welcoming her decision, he quashed it himself by his ultimatums to Russia and France. Neither France nor Russia had at any moment during these stirring days kept step with Austria and Germany in their military preparations. They deliberately and ostentatiously lagged behind at the cost of precious time and strategic advantages, and in the delusive belief that they were dealing with two peace-loving States, whereas they were being circumvented by two banded conspirators whose

one aim was to execute their plot at the lowest possible cost, and one of whom was determined to execute it in any and every event.

I endeavoured to make this aspect of the collision as clear as the restrictions of censorship would allow. No one capable of reading and grasping the meaning of a cautiously worded warning could mistake the import of the following passage of a message which I sent to the *Daily Telegraph* on July 26th, fully a week before the die had been cast. I wrote :

As I have explained, the assassination of the Archduke and the greater or lesser degree of indirect responsibility for this crime which may be ascribed to Servia's public men are matters which touch but the fringe of the question. The real issue lies much deeper than the events of the last few weeks. It is of long standing, and has been submitted time and again to the Servian Government and people, who are therefore deemed to be in possession of all the requisite data for coming to a definite decision. Hence the probable refusal with which the Austrian Ministers will meet such requests by one or all of the Entente Powers. The German Government was kept accurately and fully posted well in advance by reason of the far-reaching practical decisions which the sequel of this action might suddenly and peremptorily oblige her to take.

All the deliberation, therefore, on the Note and the contingent necessity of following it up in ways unwelcome to both allies, but unavoidable in certain circumstances, took place beforehand, and, together with it, the requisite diplomatic and military measures were adopted by the statesmen of Vienna and Buda-

pest before any overt action was undertaken. Vigilant attention was paid to the choice of a propitious moment.

It was a moment when the sympathies of Europe were with the Austro-Hungarian people, whose Soveriegn-designate was cruelly slain by political assassins from Servia at the instigation of men who occupied posts as public servants there. It was a moment when the French nation, impressed by revelations made in the Senate respecting its inadequate preparedness for war, appears less than ever minded to take any diplomatic action which might lead to a breach of the peace. It was a moment when the cares of the British Government are absorbed in forecasting and preparing for the fateful consequences of its internal policy, which may, it is apprehended, culminate in civil war. It was a moment when the President and Foreign Secretary of the French Republic were absent in Russia, drinking toasts to the peace of Europe and celebrating the concord and brotherhood of the French and Russian peoples. It was a moment when Russia herself is confronted with a problem of revolutionary strikes, which, it is assumed, would set in with oceanic violence if that Empire were to embark in war with the Central European Powers.

Finally, it was the moment after Servia's friend and mentor, M. de Hartwig, the Russian Minister in Belgrade, had been called to his last account, and King Peter's Ministers were obliged to come to a decision on the merits of the case alone, without M. de Hartwig's counsel, and without being able to reckon with confidence upon any backing, military or even diplomatic.

To imagine, therefore, that the Austro-Hungarian statesmen would deliberately throw away any of

the advantages offered by this complex of favourable conditions would be to credit them with a degree of *naïveté* uncommon among public men. The object which the Austrian Emperor's Ministers had in view when presenting the Note was precisely to elicit a refusal, or acceptance, pure and simple, not to wrangle about the wording of conditions or diplomatic formulas. The average man in the Dual Monarchy was afraid that the reply might be an acquiescence, and he said so. His hope, which never hardened into belief, was that Baron Giesl would receive a *non possumus* for his answer.

To the British public this was as clear an exposé of the actual situation and its bearings upon the peace of Europe as could well be given.

All Europe, and in particular the British Foreign Office, was now beginning to see that the open and secret moves of this fateful chess-match were determined by Germany, who was the real player throughout. Hence the redoubling of the efforts made to get Berlin to utter the word which would have dispelled the storm-clouds. If the Kaiser's Government had intimated to Vienna their desire to see the demands of the ultimatum modified, as they could have done, there is no doubt that the answer would have been compliance. That this step ought to have been taken, not only for peace' sake, but also on the merits of the case, can be shown from the announcement made by the German Secretary of State himself. Sir Edward Grey wrote on July 27th: "The German Secretary of State has himself said that *there were some things in the Austrian Note that*

Servia could hardly be expected to accept." Why, then, one may pertinently ask, did the German Government not take exception to them ? To this the only rational answer is, because it approved, nay inspired, the policy of asking for the impossible in order to elicit a refusal. If those impossible demands had been withdrawn, Russia was ready to give Austria a free hand. And Austria finally agreed to withdraw them, but Germany vetoed her sudden moderation by presenting ultimatums to Russia and France.

It was Germany, therefore, who plunged Europe into war.

For lest there should remain the shadow of a doubt as to the leading part played by the Kaiser and his Ministers in picking the quarrel with Servia and Russia, Sir Edward Grey left it to Berlin to make any suggestions it cared to offer with a view to compromising the differences.

I urged (he writes) that the German Government should suggest any method by which the influence of the four Powers could be used together to prevent war between Austria and Russia. France agreed. Italy agreed. The whole idea of mediation or mediating influence was ready to be put in operation by *any method that Germany* could suggest, if mine was not acceptable. In fact, mediation was ready to come into operation by any method that Germany thought possible if only Germany would " press the button " in the interests of peace.*

This offer needs no comment. It laid the entire

* Sir Edward Grey's Despatch, July 29th.

responsibility for non-acceptance on the shoulders of the Kaiser and his advisers. It was with Germany's sabre that the statesmen of Vienna and Budapest were endeavouring to frighten the Slavs. She had the right and the duty to withhold her military support from an ally whose cause was not just. And she owned in words that Austria's cause answered to this description. Yet she not only upheld that cause, but took the initiative in furthering it, her motive being that Russia, according to her information, was crippled and powerless, and could now be discredited in the eyes of her protégées and humbled in the dust. This was an opportunity that might not recur, and should, therefore, be utilized to the fullest. Accordingly, Germany would confront Russia with the choice between a diplomatic or a military defeat.

That, in brief, was the Kaiser's line of action.

And here we reach the parting of the ways of Austria and Germany. The statesmen of Vienna dreaded war with Russia, and as soon as it faced them drew back and lowered their tone. On July 27th Sir Edward Grey was informed by our Ambassador in Vienna that the conversations between the Tsar's Foreign Minister in St. Petersburg and the Austrian Ambassador had been proceeding, and the two negociators had made perceptible headway. "The former had agreed that much of the Austro-Hungarian Note to Servia was perfectly reasonable, *and, in fact, they had practically reached an under-*

standing as to the guarantees which Servia might reasonably be asked to give to Austria-Hungary for her future good behaviour." In other words, the main difficulty seemed to have been overcome. But the German Ambassador in Vienna had still to be reckoned with. This *advocatus diaboli* was determined that Russia should quaff the cup of humiliation to the dregs. And he succeeded.

The very next day Count Berchtold, in answer to a request from the Russian Ambassador in Vienna that the conversations in St. Petersburg should be continued and that the Austrian Ambassador there should be invested with full powers for the purpose, stated that he was unable to comply with the request.* On this same day Russia ordered a partial mobilization, and declared that it connoted no aggressive intention against Germany.

It was meant only as an admonition to Austria that, while anxious to settle all differences in a friendly way, Russia was not quite so incapacitated for military action as her neighbour imagined. It was a perfectly legitimate reply to Austria's partial mobilization and declaration of war against Servia. Nobody was taken by surprise by it except the two States which had set Russia down as militarily powerless. And of these Austria was the more painfully impressed, and showed this by a sudden infusion of the spirit of compromise into her diplomatic methods. Two days later she reconsidered her refusal

* Cf. Sir M. de Bunsen's Despatch dated London, Sept 1st.

to allow the conversations in St. Petersburg to be continued. Count Berchtold received the Russian Ambassador in a friendly manner, and apprized him that his request would be complied with, and the negociations with M. Sazonoff would be resumed. And they were resumed and worked out to what was rightly considered success.

But Germany again stepped in—not, however, as mediator, but as a marplot.

CHAPTER VIII

THE EARTHQUAKE

AUSTRIA-HUNGARY, sobered down by the tremendous consequences of her obstinacy, which now loomed large, displayed a conciliatory frame of mind. Her Ambassador in the Russian capital, implicitly confessing that the ultimatum to Servia was an act of provocation, wisely yielded on the crucial difference between the two Governments, and assured M. Sazonoff that Austria would submit to mediation the demands in the ultimatum which appeared destructive of Servia's independence. In other words, she gave way, and the long-sought issue out of the deadlock was found, and found without Germany's assistance. What was wanted now was no longer Germany's active co-operation, but only her abstention from mischief-making.

But the moment Austria became conciliatory Germany assumed an attitude of sheer aggression which at once took the matter out the diplomatic sphere and left no room for compromise.

On July 31st the earthquake came. Germany presented her ultimatum to Russia, allowing her only twelve hours to issue the order for demobi-

lization. Twelve hours! It is impossible not to recognize the same Hohenzollern touch in this document and that other one which had been presented shortly before to Servia. They both bear the impress of the monarch who once publicly said: "There is but one will, and that is mine."* Contemptuous silence was the only answer vouchsafed to this arrogant demand, which was intended to cow the Tsar and his Ministers before they could consult with their foreign friends. On August 1st the sheepish-looking diplomatist who represented the mighty Kaiser in St. Petersburg proceeded to the Foreign Office to deliver his last and fatal message there, and, according to the papers, he transformed the awful tragism of the moment into an incident worthy of an *opéra bouffe* by handing to the Foreign Minister a paper one side of which contained a declaration of war, while the other was a statement prepared for the eventuality of Russia's acquiescence. And with this claim to be remembered in the history of involuntary humour Count Pourtalès made his exit from public life.

In this odd way new actors were introduced into a drama which had been originally composed only for three. The result was exceedingly distasteful to the statesmen of Vienna, and Budapest. It was recognized as a source of complications and difficulties which had indeed been provided for, but which it would have been

* The Kaiser was then addressing his soldiers.

more advantageous to separate and cope with in detail. All that now remained for German diplomacy was to make absolutely sure of the neutrality of Great Britain.

It may not be amiss, however, to lay before the reader the instructive account of the final stages of diplomatic effort as sketched by the British ex-Ambassador to the Court of Vienna in his supplementary dispatch, dated London, September 1st :—

The delivery at Belgrade on July 23rd of the Austrian note to Servia was preceded by a period of absolute silence at the Ballplatz. Except Herr von Tschirschky, who must have been aware of the tenour if not of the actual words of the note, none of my colleagues was allowed to see through the veil. On July 22nd and 23rd M. Dumaine, French Ambassador, had long interviews with Baron Macchio, one of the Under Secretaries of State for Foreign Affairs, by whom he was left under the impression that the words of warning he had been instructed to speak to the Austro-Hungarian Government had not been unavailing, and that the note which was being drawn up would be found to contain nothing with which a self-respecting State need hesitate to comply. At the second of these interviews he was not even informed that the note was at that very moment being presented at Belgrade, or that it would be published in Vienna on the following morning. Count Forgach, the other Under Secretary of State, had indeed been good enough to confide to me on the same day the true character of the note, and the fact of its presentation about the time we were speaking.

The Bolt from the Blue.

So little had the Russian Ambassador been made aware of what was preparing that he actually left Vienna on a fortnight's leave of absence about July 20th. He had only been absent a few days when events compelled him to return. It might have been supposed that Duc Avarna, Ambassador of the allied Italian Kingdom, which was bound to be so closely affected by fresh complications in the Balkans, would have been taken fully into the confidence of Count Berchtold during this critical time. In point of fact, his Excellency was left completely in the dark. As for myself, no indication was given me by Count Berchtold of the impending storm, and it was from a private source that I received on July 15th the forecast of what was about to happen, which I telegraphed to you the following day. It is true that during all this time the *Neue Freie Presse* and other leading Viennese newspapers were using language which pointed unmistakably to war with Servia. The official *Fremdenblatt*, however, was more cautious, and till the note was published the prevailing opinion among my colleagues was that Austria would shrink from courses calculated to involve her in grave European complications.

On July 24th the note was published in the newspapers. By common consent it was at once styled an ultimatum. Its integral acceptance by Servia was neither expected nor desired; and when, on the following afternoon, it was at first rumoured in Vienna that it had been unconditionally accepted, there was a moment of keen disappointment. The mistake was quickly corrected, and as soon as it was known later in the evening that the Servian reply had been rejected and that Baron Giesl had

broken off relations at Belgrade, Vienna burst into a frenzy of delight, vast crowds parading the streets and singing patriotic songs till the small hours of the morning.

War Against Servia Only.

The demonstrations were perfectly orderly, consisting for the most part of organized processions through the principal streets, ending up at the Ministry of War. One or two attempts to make hostile manifestations against the Russian Embassy were frustrated by the strong guard of police which held the approaches to the principal Embassies during those days. The demeanour of the people at Vienna, and, as I was informed, in many other principal cities of the Monarchy, showed plainly the popularity of the idea of war with Servia, and there can be no doubt that the small body of Austrian and Hungarian statesmen by whom this momentous step was adopted gauged rightly the sense, and it may even be said the determination, of the people, except presumably in portions of the provinces inhabited by the Slav races. There had been much disappointment in many quarters at the avoidance of war with Servia during the annexation crisis in 1908 and again in connection with the recent Balkan War. Count Berchtold's peace policy had met with little sympathy in the Delegation. Now the floodgates were opened, and the entire people and Press clamoured impatiently for immediate and condign punishment of the hated Servian race. The country certainly believed that it had before it only the alternative of subduing Servia or of submitting sooner or later to mutilation at her hands. But a peaceful solution should first have been attempted. Few seemed to reflect that the forcible intervention of a Great Power in the Balkans must inevitably

call other Great Powers into the field. So just was the cause of Austria held to be, that it seemed to her people inconceivable that any country should place itself in her path, or that questions of mere policy or prestige should be regarded anywhere as superseding the necessity which had arisen to exact summary vengeance for the crime of Sarajevo. The conviction had been expressed to me by the German Ambassador on July 24th that Russia would stand aside. This feeling, which was also held at the Ballplatz, influenced, no doubt, the course of events, and it is deplorable that no effort should have been made to secure by means of diplomatic negociations the acquiescence of Russia and Europe as a whole in some peaceful compromise of the Servian question by which Austrian fears of Servian aggression and intrigue might have been removed for the future. Instead of adopting this course, the Austro-Hungarian Government resolved upon war. The inevitable consequence ensued. Russia replied to a partial Austrian mobilization and declaration of war against Servia by a partial Russian mobilization against Austria. Austria met this move by completing her own mobilization, and Russia again responded with results which have passed into history.

Russia had no Right to Intervene.

On July 28th I saw Count Berchtold and urged as strongly as I could that the scheme of mediation mentioned in your speech in the House of Commons on the previous day should be accepted as offering an honourable and peaceful settlement of the question at issue. His Excellency himself read to me a telegraphic report of the speech, but added that matters had gone too far; Austria was

that day declaring war on Servia, and she could never accept the conference which you had suggested should take place between the less interested Powers on the basis of the Servian reply. This was a matter which must be settled directly between the two parties immediately concerned. I said his Majesty's Government would hear with regret that hostilities could not be arrested, as you feared they would lead to European complications. I disclaimed any British lack of sympathy with Austria in the matter of her legitimate grievances against Servia, and pointed out that, whereas Austria seemed to be making these the starting-point of her policy, his Majesty's Government were bound to look at the question primarily from the point of view of the maintenance of the peace of Europe. In this way the two countries might easily drift apart.

His Excellency said that he, too, was keeping the European aspect of the question in sight. He thought, however, that Russia would have no right to intervene after receiving his assurance that Austria sought no territorial aggrandisement. His Excellency remarked to me in the course of his conversation that, though he had been glad to co-operate towards bringing about the settlement which had resulted from the ambassadorial conferences in London during the Balkan crisis, he had never had much belief in the permanency of that settlement, which was necessarily of a highly artificial character, inasmuch as the interests which it sought to harmonize were in themselves profoundly divergent. His Excellency maintained a most friendly demeanour throughout the interview, but left no doubt in my mind as to the determination of the Austro-Hungarian Government to proceed with the invasion of Servia.

Austria Yields at Last.

The German Government claim to have persevered to the end in the endeavour to support at Vienna your successive proposals in the interest of peace. Herr von Tschirschky abstained from inviting my co-operation or that of the French and Russian Ambassadors in carrying out his instructions to that effect, and I had no means of knowing what response he was receiving from the Austro-Hungarian Government. I was, however, kept fully informed by M. Schebeko, the Russian Ambassador, of his own direct negociations with Count Berchtold. M. Schebeko endeavoured on July 28th to persuade the Austro-Hungarian Government to furnish Count Szapary with full powers to continue at St. Petersburg the hopeful conversations which had there been taking place between the latter and M. Sazonoff. Count Berchtold refused at the time, but two days later (July 30th), though in the meantime Russia had partially mobilized against Austria, he received M. Schebeko again, in a perfectly friendly manner, and gave his consent to the continuance of the conversations in St. Petersburg. From now onwards the tension between Russia and Germany was much greater than between Russia and Austria. As between the latter an arrangement seemed almost in sight, and on August 1st I was informed by M. Schebeko that Count Szapary had at last conceded the main point at issue by announcing to M. Sazonoff that Austria would consent to submit to mediation the points in the Note to Servia which seemed incompatible with the maintenance of Servian independence. M. Sazonoff, M. Schebeko added, had accepted this proposal on condition that Austria would refrain from the actual invasion of Servia. Austria, in fact, had finally yielded, and

that she herself had at this point good hopes of a peaceful issue is shown by the communication made to you on August 1st by Count Mensdorff, to the effect that Austria had neither "banged the door" on compromise nor cut off the conversations. M. Schebeko to the end was working hard for peace. He was holding the most conciliatory language to Count Berchtold, and he informed me that the latter, as well as Count Forgach, had responded in the same spirit. Certainly it was too much for Russia to expect that Austria would hold back her armies, but this matter could probably have been settled by negociation, and M. Schebeko repeatedly told me he was prepared to accept any reasonable compromise.

Germany Enters the Lists.

Unfortunately, these conversations at St. Petersburg and Vienna were cut short by the transfer of the dispute to the more dangerous ground of a direct conflict between Germany and Russia. Germany intervened on July 31st by means of her double ultimatums to St. Petersburg and Paris. The ultimatums were of a kind to which only one answer is possible, and Germany declared war on Russia on August 1st, and on France on August 3rd. A few days' delay might in all probability have saved Europe from one of the greatest calamities in history.

Russia still abstained from attacking Austria, and M. Schebeko had been instructed to remain at his post till war should actually be declared against her by the Austro-Hungarian Government. This only happened on August 6th, when Count Berchtold informed the foreign missions at Vienna that "the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador at St. Petersburg had been instructed to notify the Russian Government that, in view of the menacing attitude

of Russia in the Austro-Servian conflict, and the fact that Russia had commenced hostilities against Germany, Austria-Hungary considered herself also at war with Russia."

The Ambassadors Make their Exit.

M. Schebeko left quietly in a special train provided by the Austro-Hungarian Government on August 7th. He had urgently requested to be conveyed to the Rumanian frontier, so that he might be able to proceed to his own country, but was taken instead to the Swiss frontier, and ten days later I found him at Berne.

M. Dumaine, French Ambassador, stayed on till August 12th. On the previous day he had been instructed to demand his passport on the ground that Austrian troops were being employed against France. This point was not fully cleared up when I left Vienna. On August 9th M. Dumaine had received from Count Berchtold the categorical declaration that no Austrian troops were being moved to Alsace. The next day this statement was supplemented by a further one, in writing, giving Count Berchtold's assurance that not only had no Austrian troops been moved actually to the French frontier, but that none were moving from Austria in a westerly direction into Germany in such a way that they might replace German troops employed at the front. These two statements were made by Count Berchtold in reply to precise questions put to him by M. Dumaine, under instructions from his Government. The French Ambassador's departure was not attended by any hostile demonstration, but his Excellency before leaving had been justly offended by a harangue made by the Chief Burgomaster of Vienna to the crowd assembled before the steps of the Town Hall,

in which he assured the people that Paris was in the throes of a revolution and that the President of the Republic had been assassinated.

The British declaration of war on Germany was made known in Vienna by special editions of the newspapers about midday on August 5th. An abstract of your speeches in the House of Commons, and also of the German Chancellor's speech in the Reichstag of August 4th, appeared the same day, as well as the text of the German ultimatum to Belgium. Otherwise few details of the great events of these days transpired. The *Neue Freie Presse* was violently insulting towards England. The *Fremdenblatt* was not offensive, but little or nothing was said in the columns of any Vienna paper to explain that the violation of Belgian neutrality had left his Majesty's Government no alternative but to take part in the war.

The declaration of Italian neutrality was bitterly felt in Vienna, but scarcely mentioned in the newspapers.

On August 5th I had the honour to receive your instruction of the previous day preparing me for the immediate outbreak of war with Germany, but adding that, Austria being understood to be not yet at that date at war with Russia and France, you did not desire me to ask for my passport or to make any particular communication to the Austro-Hungarian Government. You stated at the same time that his Majesty's Government of course expected Austria not to commit any act of war against us without the notice required by diplomatic usage.

On Thursday morning, August 13th, I had the honour to receive your telegram of the 12th, stating that you had been compelled to inform Count Mensdorff, at the request of the French Government,

that a complete rupture had occurred between France and Austria, on the ground that Austria had declared war on Russia, who was already fighting on the side of France, and that Austria had sent troops to the German frontier under conditions that were a direct menace to France. The rupture having been brought about with France in this way, I was to ask for my passport, and your telegram stated, in conclusion, that you had informed Count Mensdorff that a state of war would exist between the two countries from midnight of August 12th.

Traditional Austrian Courtesy.

After seeing Mr. Penfield, the United States Ambassador, who accepted immediately in the most friendly spirit my request that his Excellency would take charge provisionally of British interests in Austria-Hungary during the unfortunate interruption of relations, I proceeded, with Mr. Theo Russell, Counsellor of his Majesty's Embassy, to the Ballplatz. Count Berchtold received me at midday. I delivered my message, for which his Excellency did not seem to be unprepared, although he told me that a long telegram from Count Mensdorff had just come in, but had not yet been brought to him. His Excellency received my communication with the courtesy which never leaves him. He deplored the unhappy complications which were drawing such good friends as Austria and England into war. In point of fact, he added, Austria did not consider herself then at war with France, though diplomatic relations with that country had been broken off. I explained in a few words how circumstances had forced this unwelcome conflict upon us. We both avoided useless argument. Then I ventured to recommend to his Excellency's consideration the

case of the numerous stranded British subjects at Carlsbad, Vienna, and other places throughout the country. I had already had some correspondence with him on the subject, and his Excellency took a note of what I said, and promised to see what could be done to get them away when the stress of mobilization should be over. Count Berchtold agreed to, Mr. Phillpotts, till then British Consul at Vienna under Consul-General Sir Frederick Duncan, being left by me at the Embassy in the capacity of Chargé des Archives. He presumed a similar privilege would not be refused in England if desired on behalf of the Austro-Hungarian Government. I took leave of Count Berchtold with sincere regret, having received from the day of my arrival in Vienna, not quite nine months before, many marks of friendship and consideration from his Excellency. As I left I begged his Excellency to present my profound respects to the Emperor Francis Joseph, together with an expression of my hope that his Majesty would pass through these sad times with unimpaired health and strength. Count Berchtold was pleased to say he would deliver my message.

Count Walterskirchen, of the Austro-Hungarian Foreign Office, was deputed the following morning to bring me my passport and to acquaint me with the arrangements made for my departure that evening (August 14th). In the course of the day Countess Berchtold and other ladies of Vienna society called to take leave of Lady de Bunsen at the Embassy. We left the railway station by special train for the Swiss frontier at 7 p.m. No disagreeable incidents occurred. Count Walterskirchen was present at the station on behalf of Count Berchtold. The journey was necessarily slow, owing to the encumbered state of the line. We reached Buchs, on the Swiss frontier,

early in the morning of August 17th. At the first halting place there had been some hooting and stone throwing on the part of the entraining troops and station officials, but no inconvenience was caused, and at the other large stations on our route we found that ample measures had been taken to preserve us from molestation as well as to provide us with food. I was left in no doubt that the Austro-Hungarian Government had desired that the journey should be performed under the most comfortable conditions possible, and that I should receive on my departure all the marks of consideration due to his Majesty's representative. I was accompanied by my own family and the entire staff of the Embassy, for whose untiring zeal and efficient help in trying times I desire to express my sincere thanks.

Germany's first care, once Russia and France had been provoked to take up arms, was to make British neutrality quite secure. It had been relied upon from the very inception of the German plan down to the moment* when Sir Edward Grey delivered his telling speech in the House of Commons. British neutrality was an unquestioned postulate which lay at the very root of the scheme engineered by the Empire-builders of Berlin. And they clung to it throughout with the tenacity of drowning men holding on to a frozen plank in Polar seas.

* Monday, August 3rd.

CHAPTER IX

BRITISH NEUTRALITY AND BELLIGERENCY

Over and over again I heard the chances of British neutrality and belligerency discussed by statesmen of the two military Empires, and the odds in favour of our holding strictly aloof from hostilities were set down as equivalent to certainty. The grounds for this conviction were numerous, and to them convincing. Great Britain, it was argued, possesses no land army capable of throwing an expeditionary force of any value into the Continental arena. All her fighting strength is concentrated in her navy, which could render but slight positive services to the mighty hosts in the field with whom the issue would lie. Consequently the losses she would sustain by breaking off commercial intercourse with her best customer would be enormous as compared to the slender help she could give her friends. And if the worst came to the worst Germany might take that help as given, and promise in return for neutrality to guarantee spontaneously whatever the British Navy might be supposed capable of protecting efficaciously.

Again, public opinion in Great Britain is opposed to war and to Continental entanglements. And for that reason no binding engagements have been entered into by the British Government towards France or Russia, even during the course of the present crisis. Had any intention been harboured to swerve from this course, it would doubtless have manifested itself in some tangible shape before now. But no tokens of any such deviation from the traditional policy has been perceived. On the contrary, it is well known to the German Government that the Cabinet actually in power consists of Ministers who are averse on principle to a policy which might entangle their country in a Continental war, and who will stand up for that principle if ever it be called in question. And in support of this contention words or acts ascribed to the Cabinet and to certain of its members were quoted and construed as pointing to the same conclusion.

One little syllogism in particular engraved itself on my memory. It ran somewhat as follows. The Asquith Cabinet is dependent on the votes of the Radicals and the Irish Home Rulers. Now, the former hate Russia cordially, and will not allow this opportunity of humiliating her to lapse unutilized. And the latter, with a little war of their own to wage, have no superfluous energies to devote to a foreign campaign. Consequently, the Government, even were it desirous of embarking on a warlike

adventure, is powerless. It cannot swim against a current set by its own supporters.

Those and other little sums in equation were almost always capped by a conclusive reference to the impending civil war in Ireland and England, the danger of risings in Egypt and India, and the constant trouble with the suffragettes. Whenever this topic came up for discussion I was invariably a silent listener, so conversant were the debaters with all the aspects and bearings of the Ulster movement, and so eager were they to display their knowledge. I learned, for instance, that numerous German agents, journalists, and one diplomatist well known to social London had studied the question on the spot, and entertained no doubt that a fratricidal struggle was about to begin. I received the condolence of my eminent friends on the impending break-up of old England, and I heard the reiterated dogma that with her hands thus full she would steer clear of the conflict between the groups of Continental Great Powers. I was comforted, however, by the assurance that at the close of hostilities Great Britain might make her moderating influence felt to good purpose and resume the praiseworthy efforts to the failure of which the coming catastrophe was to be attributed.

In all these close calculations the decisive element of national character was left out, with the consequences we see. Despite their powers of observation and analysis, the Germans, even those who are gifted and experi-

enced, are devoid of some indefinable inner sense without which they must ever lack true insight into the soul-stuff, the dormant qualities of the people whose wrath they have wantonly aroused. To the realm of British thought and feeling they, with their warped psychological equipment, find no access. Its secondary characteristics they grasp with their noted thoroughness and seek to practise upon with their traditional cynicism. But the deeper springs of our race-character, its clear-souled faith, its masculine vigour, and its vast reserve of elemental force, lie beyond their narrow range of vision. To the sentient and perceptive powers even of the most acute German observer, the workings of the British soul, its inherited nobilities, its deep moral feeling, are inaccessible. And here, more than in any other branch of the "intelligence department," a little knowledge is indeed a dangerous thing.

This want of penetration accounts for the greatest and most calamitous mistake into which the Kaiser and his numerous "eyes" in this country fell. They watched the surface manifestations of public life here, and drew their inferences as though there were no other, no more decisive, elements to be reckoned with. Herr von Kuhlmann, in particular, had made a complete survey of the situation in Ireland, and his exhaustive report was corroborated by emphatic statements of a like tenor received from independent witnesses whose duty it was to collect data on the spot.

Utterances of public men and influential private individuals in this country were reported in full. Plans, dates, numbers were set down with scrupulous care. Local colour was deftly worked in, and the general conclusions bore the marks of unquestionable truths. Even the suffragette movement was included in this comprehensive survey, and was classed among the fetters which must handicap the British Cabinet, should it display any velleity to join hands with France and Russia. Every possible factor except the one just mentioned was calculated with the nicety of an apothecary compounding a prescription. Nothing, apparently, was left to chance.

Summaries of these interesting documents were transmitted to Vienna, where they served merely to confirm the conviction, harboured from the beginning, that whatever conflicts might rage on the Continent, Great Britain would stick to her own business, which was bound to prove uncommonly engrossing in the near future. Not the faintest trace of doubt or misgiving was anywhere perceptible among Germans or Austrians down to July 30th. On the previous day the German Ambassador in London had had a conversation with Sir Edward Grey, which appears to have made a far deeper impression on him than the words uttered by the British Foreign Secretary would necessarily convey. He had been told that the situation was very grave, but that, so long as it was restricted to the issues then actually involved, Great Britain had no thought of identi-

fying herself with any Continental Power. If, however, Germany took a hand in it and were followed by France, all European interests would be affected, and "I did not wish him to be misled by the friendly tone of our conversation—which I hoped would continue—into thinking that we should stand aside." Characteristic is the remark which these words elicited from Prince Lichnowsky. "He said that he quite understood this." And yet he could not have understood it. Evidently he interpreted it as he would have interpreted a similar announcement made by his own chief. To his thinking it was but a face-saving phrase, not a declaration of position meant to be taken seriously. Otherwise he would not have asked the further question which he at once put. "He said that he quite understood, but he asked whether I meant that we should, under certain circumstances, intervene."

I replied (continues Sir Edward Grey) that I did not wish to say that, or to use anything that was like a threat, or attempt to apply pressure by saying that, if things became worse, we should intervene. There would be no question of our intervening if Germany was not involved, or even if France was not involved. But we knew very well that if the issue did become such that we thought British interests required us to intervene, we must intervene at once, and the decision would have to be very rapid, just as the decisions of other Powers had to be. I hoped that the friendly tone of our conversations would continue as at present, and that I should

be able to keep as closely in touch with the German Government when working for peace. But if we failed in our efforts to keep the peace, and if the issue spread so that it involved practically every European interest, I do not wish to be open to any reproach from him that the friendly tone of all our conversations had misled him or his Government into supposing that we should not take action, and to the reproach that if they had not been so misled, the course of things might have been different.

The German Ambassador took no exception to what I had said ; indeed, he told me that it accorded with what he had already given in Berlin as his view of the situation.

Not so much this plain statement of the British case as the impressive way in which it was delivered startled the Kaiser's representative and flashed a blinding light on the dark ways of German diplomacy. That same evening the Prince made known the personal effect upon himself of what he had seen and heard, and it was that Great Britain's neutrality " could not be relied upon." This " subjective impression," as they termed it, was telegraphed to Vienna, where it was anxiously discussed. And, curiously enough, it sufficed to shatter the hopes which Austrian statesmen had cherished that nothing was to be feared from Great Britain. Psychologically, this tragic way of taking the news is difficult to explain. Whether it was that the Austrians, having less faith in the solidarity of their Empire and the staying powers of their mixed population, and greater misgivings about the issue of the

war, were naturally more pessimistic and more apt to magnify than to underrate the dangers with which a European conflict threatened them, or that they had received unwelcome tidings of a like nature from an independent source, I am unable to determine. I know, however, that Prince Lichnowsky's own mind was made up during that colloquy with Sir Edward Grey. And he made no mystery of it. To a statesman who brought up the topic in the course of an ordinary conversation he remarked :

It is my solid conviction that England will not only throw in her lot with France and Russia, but will be first in the arena. There is not the shadow of a doubt about it. Nothing can stop her now.

That view was also adopted by the statesmen of Austria-Hungary, who communicated it to me on the following day.* It was on July 29th that the German Chancellor had tendered the "strong bid" for British neutrality from which the wished-for result was anticipated. And to this "infamous proposal" the answer was not telegraphed until July 30th. In Vienna we had cognizance of it on the following day. But I was informed on Saturday that, however unpromising the outlook, further exertions would be put forth to persuade Great Britain not to relinquish her rôle of mediatrix, but to reserve her beneficent influence on the Powers until they had tried issues in a land campaign and were ready for peace negociations. Then she

* Friday, July 31st, 1914.

could play to good purpose the congenial part of peacemaker and make her moderating influence felt by both parties, who, exhausted by the campaign, would be willing to accept a compromise.

These efforts were ingeniously planned, the German statesmen using British ideas, aims, and traditions as weapons of combat against the intentions—still wavering, it was believed—of the Liberal Government to resort to force if suasion and argument should fail, in order to redeem the nation's plighted word and uphold Belgian neutrality. Among these aims which our Government had especially at heart was a general understanding with Germany, and the perspective of realizing this was dangled before the eyes of our Government by the Chancellor. But the plan had one capital defect. It ignored the view taken in this country of the sanctity of treaties. The course taken by the conversations, which were now carried on with rapidity to the accompaniment of the march of armed men and the clatter of horses' hoofs, is worth considering. Down to the last moment the British Government kept its hands free. M. Sazonoff's appeals to our Ambassador to move his Government to take sides fell on deaf ears. The endeavours of the Government of the French Republic were equally infructuous. "In the present case," Sir Edward Grey told the French Ambassador in London, "the dispute between Austria and

Edward Grey asked for an extension of time, for a Conference of the Powers, or for any other facilities for settling the Austro-Servian quarrel diplomatically, Germany and Austria were unable to comply with his request. Would Vienna consent to lengthen the time accorded to Servia for an answer? No, she was unable to do so. And in this Germany backed her up as behoves a brilliant second. Dealings with Belgrade, she held, must be effected expeditiously. And when Sir Edward Grey proposed to the German Government that the Servian reply might be used as a basis for conversations, the Imperial Chancellor *regrets* that things have marched too rapidly!

I was sent for again to-day by the Imperial Chancellor (writes Sir Edward Goschen), who told me that he regretted to state that the Austro-Hungarian Government, to whom he had at once communicated your opinion, had announced that *events had marched too rapidly*, and that it was therefore *too late* to act upon your suggestion.*

Thus having first fixed the time-limit at forty-eight hours and then refused to have it extended in order to allow time for a settlement, Germany expresses her regret that it is too late to act on the suggestion that a pause shall ensue to enable a peaceful arrangement to be arrived at.

The cynicism embodied in this answer is curiously like the pleas for mercy addressed by

* White Paper. Despatch of British Ambassador in Berlin, dated July 29th.

a young murderer to the jury before the verdict was brought in. "I am an orphan," he said, "and alone in a cold, unsympathetic world. I can look neither to a father nor a mother to advise, chide, or comfort me. May I hope that you at least will show me pity and mercy?" A touching appeal it might well seem until read in the light of the circumstance that he who made it was being tried for the murder of both his parents.

With a prescience of the coming struggle which his own deliberate manœuvres were meant to bring about, the Chancellor displayed keen and, it was then believed, praiseworthy anxiety to impress our Government with the sincerity of his desire and the strenuousness of his efforts for peace.

From the fact that he (the Imperial Chancellor) had gone so far in the matter of giving advice at Vienna, his Excellency hoped that you would realize that he was sincerely doing all in his power to prevent danger of European complications.

The fact of his communicating this information to you was a proof of the confidence which he felt in you, and evidence of his anxiety that you should know he was doing his best to support your efforts in the cause of general peace, efforts which he sincerely appreciated.

His Excellency was aware of the necessity of preparing the ground for the next and most difficult move of all, and was providing for it in his own way. It was a German Captatio benevolentiæ.

CHAPTER X

THE INFAMOUS OFFER

WHILE the Kaiser and his advisers were thus adroitly pulling diplomatic and journalistic wires to secure coherence of time with place and auspicious conditions for dealing the premeditated blow, the British Government were treated with the fine blinding dust of ethical phrases and stories of persevering but baffled efforts put forth in the cause of European peace.

The German Ambassador (Sir Edward Grey writes to Sir Edward Goschen) has been instructed by the German Chancellor to inform me that he is endeavouring to mediate between Vienna and St. Petersburg, and he hopes with good success. Austria and Russia seem to be in constant touch, and he is endeavouring to make Vienna explain in a satisfactory form at St. Petersburg the scope and extension of Austrian proceedings in Servia. I told the German Ambassador that an agreement arrived at direct between Austria and Russia would be the best possible solution. I would press no proposal as long as there was a prospect of that, but my information this morning was that the Austrian Government have declined the suggestion of the

Russian Government that the Austrian Ambassador at St. Petersburg should be authorized to discuss directly with the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs the means of settling the Austro-Servian conflict. The press correspondents at St. Petersburg had been told that the Russian Government would mobilize. The German Government had said that they were favourable in principle to mediation between Russia and Austria if necessary. They seemed to think the particular method of conference, consultation, or discussion, or even *conversations a quatre* in London too formal a method. I urged that the German Government should suggest any method by which the influence of the four Powers could be used together to prevent war between Austria and Russia. France agreed, Italy agreed. The whole idea of mediation or mediating influence was ready to be put into operation by any method that Germany thought possible if only Germany would " press the button " in the interests of peace.

Now at this same moment orders had been issued by the Government of which the Chancellor was the head to move the advance-posts of the German army on the French frontiers. And these orders were carried out on the following day, as we now know from the French Minister's despatch to M. Cambon, dated July 31st. " The German army," he writes, " had its advance-posts on our frontiers yesterday." And we further learn from M. Sazonoff that even before this date " absolute proof was in possession of the Russian Government that Germany was making military and naval preparations

against Russia—more particularly in the direction of the Gulf of Finland."*

The disingenuousness, not to use a harsher term, of these diplomatic methods needs no comment. It is one of the inseparable marks of German diplomacy and German journalism, which are as odious in peace as are German methods of warfare during a campaign. Of plain dealing and truthful speech there is no trace. Underlying the assurances, hopes, and sincere regrets with which all German conversations with our diplomatists are larded, it is easy to distinguish the steady tendency to impress our Foreign Office with Germany's fervid desire to maintain peace, her bitter disappointment at being forced step by step into war, and her humanitarian resolve to keep that war within the narrowest possible limits. And with all the documents and the subsequent facts before us, it is just as easy to perceive the real drift of the Kaiser's scheming. Great Britain was to be made to feel that anything which Germany might be forced to do in the way of disregarding treaties would be done with the utmost reluctance and only under duress. The building up of this conviction was one of the main objects of the curious expedients resorted to by her clumsy statesmen, and was at the same time the overture to the last act in which the Treaty of 1839 was to be flung aside as a scrap of paper, but "without prejudice" to British interests.

* White Paper. Sir G. Buchanan's Despatch, July 30th.

The bid for British neutrality was the culminating phase of this unique diplomatic campaign. It was proffered with an intensity of emotion, a high-pitched feeling for the weal of the British nation, and a biblical solemnity which must, it was felt, tell with especial force with a people whose character so often merges in temperament and whose policy is always suffused with morality. Every consideration to which the Foreign Secretary, his colleagues, their parliamentary supporters, and the nation were thought to be impressible was singled out and emphasized. The smooth-tongued tempter at first, sure of his prey, approached the Liberal and pacific Cabinet through our political interests, elementary feelings, and national prejudices, winnowed by religious sentiment and passionate sincerity. With a penetrative intuition which would have proved unerring had it been guided by any of the lofty sentiments which it presupposed in its intended victim, they appealed to our loathing for crime, our hatred of oriental despotism, our indifference to Slav strivings, our aversion to the horrors of war, our love of peace, our anxiety to come to a permanent understanding with Germany, and by our attachment to all these boons of a highly cultured people they adjured us to hold aloof from the war and connive at their disregard of a treaty which they would have been delighted to respect had not brutal necessity compelled them to ignore it. But even this hard stroke of Fate—hard for them as for the Belgians

—they would deaden to the best of their power by recognizing Belgium's integrity anew at the end of the war.

It was at this end of the cleverly fashioned disguise that the cloven hoof protruded.

It is worth recalling that on the very day* on which the German Ambassador, acting on the instructions of his Chief, told Sir Edward Grey that the Chancellor was endeavouring to mediate between Vienna and St. Petersburg, "and he hopes (the Chancellor) with good success," that same Chancellor, with that foreknowledge which is the sole privilege of the author of a movement, was cautiously preparing the scene for the next act on which he himself was soon to raise the curtain.

He said (our Ambassador in Berlin† wrote) that should Austria be attacked by Russia a European conflagration might, he feared, become inevitable owing to Germany's obligations as Austria's ally, in spite of his continued efforts to maintain peace. He then proceeded to make the following strong bid for British neutrality. He said that it was clear, so far as he was able to judge the main principle which governed British policy, that Great Britain would never stand by and allow France to be crushed in any conflict there might be. That, however, was not the object at which Germany aimed. Provided that neutrality of Great Britain were certain, every assurance would be given to the British Government that the Imperial Government aimed at no terri-

* July 29th.

† White Paper. Sir Edward Goschen's Despatch, July 29th.

torial acquisitions at the expense of France should they prove victorious in any war that might ensue.

I questioned his Excellency about the French colonies, and he said that he was unable to give a similar undertaking in this respect. As regards Holland, however, his Excellency said that, so long as Germany's adversaries respected the integrity and neutrality of the Netherlands, Germany was ready to give his Majesty's Government an assurance that she would do likewise. It depended upon the action of France what operations Germany might be forced to enter upon in Belgium, but when the war was over, Belgian integrity would be respected if she had not sided against Germany.

His Excellency ended by saying that ever since he had been Chancellor the object of his policy had been, as you were aware, to bring about an understanding with England; he trusted that these assurances might form the basis of the understanding which he so much desired. He had in mind a general neutrality agreement between England and Germany, though it was, of course, at the present moment too early to discuss details, and an assurance of British neutrality in the conflict which the present crisis might possibly produce would enable him to look forward to the realization of his desire.

In reply to his Excellency's enquiry how I thought his request would appeal to you, I said that I did not think it probable that at this stage of events you would care to bind yourself to any course of action, and that I was of opinion that you would desire to retain full liberty.

Now, a few remarks will suffice to set this seemingly speculative survey of the Chancellor in its true light. The impression which the opening

words conveyed, "Should Austria be attacked by Russia a European conflagration might, he feared, become inevitable owing to Germany's obligations as Austria's ally," was that while Germany deprecated any course that might lead to a conflict, she would be obliged by her religious respect for her own scrap of paper to spring to her ally's support if Austria were attacked by Russia. But Austria was not attacked by Russia. On the contrary, these two Powers had come to an arrangement before Germany presented her ultimatums to Russia and France. The Kaiser declared war against Russia on August 1st, whereas Russia abstained from every overt act of hostility against Austria, and instructed her Ambassador to remain in Vienna until Austria should declare war on Russia. And this did not happen until August 6th. Germany and Russia, therefore, were several days at war, while Russia and Austria were still holding diplomatic intercourse with each other. In view of these decisive facts, one cannot seriously contend that Germany's rôle was that of an ally hastening to succour an assailed comrade.

Further, when the Chancellor was affirming that in return for British neutrality he would give every assurance that the Imperial German Government aimed at no territorial acquisitions at the expense of France, he must have known, as all the parties to the secret arrangement knew, that the wording was chosen to leave a loophole through which Italy, if she could be cajoled into active

co-operation, might pass into Savoy and Nice, and possibly even Tunis. It was exactly the same phraseology that had been employed in Austria's assurance respecting her self-denying promise not to annex any part of Servian territory to her own dominions. Both engagements were cast in the same grammatical mould; both emanated from one and the same source.

The second remark is to the effect that the German Chancellor can hardly be taken to have adequately expressed what was in his mind when he stated that it depended upon the action of France what operations Germany might be forced to enter upon in Belgium. He must have known that that was a foregone conclusion of the German Kaiser and the General Staff, with which France's action had nothing to do. That he knew this full well may be inferred from the justification for the invasion of Belgium which was officially offered to Sir E. Goschen by the German Secretary of State, von Jagow:

> They had to advance into France by the quickest and easiest way, so as to be able to get well ahead with their operations, and endeavour to strike some decisive blow as early as possible.

We have to hark back to the days of Frederick to discover a parallel for the amazing duplicity and hypocrisy of the present Kaiser's Government.

Plainly and definitively this "infamous offer" was rejected.

His Majesty's Government (ran the answer) cannot for a moment entertain the Chancellor's proposal that they should bind themselves to neutrality on such terms.

What he asks us to effect is to engage to stand by while French colonies are taken and France is beaten, so long as Germany does not take French territory as distinct from the colonies.

From the material point of view such a proposal is unacceptable, for France, without further territory in Europe being taken from her, could be so crushed as to lose her position as a Great Power and become subordinate to German policy.

Altogether apart from that, it would be a disgrace for us to make this bargain with Germany at the expense of France, a disgrace from which the good name of this country would never recover.

The Chancellor also in effect asks us to bargain away whatever obligation or interest we have as regards the neutrality of Belgium. We could not entertain that bargain either.

Having said so much, it is unnecessary to examine whether the prospect of a future general neutrality agreement between England and Germany offered positive advantages sufficient to compensate us for tying our hands now. We must reserve our full freedom to act as circumstances may seem to us to require in any such unfavourable and regrettable development of the present crisis as the Chancellor contemplates.

You should speak to the Chancellor in the above sense, and add most earnestly that the one way of maintaining the good relations between England and Germany is that they should continue to work together to preserve the peace of Europe; if we succeed in this object, the mutual relations of Ger-

many and England will, I believe, be *ipso facto* improved and strengthened. For that object His Majesty's Government will work in that way with all sincerity and goodwill.

And now the British Government in turn made a bid, an honourable bid, for peace.

And I will say this (Sir Edward Grey wrote) : If the peace of Europe can be preserved, and the present crisis safely passed, my own endeavour will be to promote some arrangement to which Germany could be a party, by which she could be assured that no aggressive or hostile policy would be pursued against her or her allies by France, Russia, and ourselves, jointly or separately. I have desired this, and worked for it, so far as I could, through the last Balkan crisis, and Germany having a corresponding object, our relations sensibly improved. The idea has hitherto been too Utopian to form the subject of definite proposals, but if this present crisis, so much more acute than any that Europe has gone through for generations, be safely passed, I am hopeful that the relief and reaction which will follow may make possible some more definite *rapprochement* between the Powers than has been possible hitherto.

Both Austria-Hungary and Germany were thus offered every inducement which the Governments of Great Britain, France, and Russia could give, including stable guarantees that nothing would be undertaken against them diplomatically or otherwise, and that they could live and thrive not only in peace, but in an atmosphere from which all fear of war was eliminated. More than this they could not have hoped for, unless they

were bent upon aggression. But then they were bent upon aggression from the outset, and their sole concern was to execute it with as much advantage and as little risk to themselves as the unusually favourable conjuncture seemed to promise. That was the mainspring of their diplomacy during the crisis.

As soon as Kriegsgefahr* was proclaimed in Germany,† and general mobilization ordered in Russia,‡ Sir Edward Grey at once drew up a question in identical terms which he had put to the French and the German Governments as to whether, in case of war, they were minded to abide by the restrictions on their future military operations which respect for the neutrality of Belgium entailed. To the Brussels Cabinet the query was whether Belgium was prepared to maintain her neutrality to the utmost of her power. These three simultaneous inquiries opened the fateful issue on which so much depended. The French Minister of Foreign Affairs unhesitatingly replied that the Government of the Republic were resolved to respect the neutrality of Belgium unless it were violated by some other Power. From Germany the British Ambassador could obtain no answer. He telegraphed :

I have seen Secretary of State, who informs me that he must consult the Emperor and the Chan-

* Literally " danger of war."

† July 31st. ‡ July 31st.

cellor before he could possibly answer. I gathered from what he said that he thought any reply they might give could not but disclose a certain amount of their plan of campaign in the event of war ensuing, and he was, therefore, very doubtful whether they would return any answer at all. His Excellency, nevertheless, took note of your request.

This reference to the disclosure of their plan of campaign was sufficiently suggestive. Characteristic of the system of making mendacious charges against all whom they are preparing to wrong is the groundless allegation contained in Sir Edward Goschen's next sentence:

It appears from what he (the Secretary of State) said that German Government consider that certain hostile acts have already been committed by Belgium. As an instance of this, he alleged that a consignment of corn for Germany had been placed under an embargo already.

I hope to see his Excellency to-morrow again to discuss the matter further, but the prospect of obtaining a definite answer seems to me remote.

Sir Edward Grey, unwilling to let this important issue be suddenly settled by an accomplished fact, informed the German Ambassador next day* that the reply of the German Government with regard to the neutrality of Belgium was a matter of very great regret, because the neutrality of Belgium affected feeling in this country.

* August 1st.

If Germany could see her way to give the same assurance as that which had been given by France it would materially contribute to relieve anxiety and tension here. On the other hand, if there were a violation of the neutrality of Belgium by one combatant while the other respected it, it would be extremely difficult to restrain public feeling in this country. I said that we had been discussing this question at a Cabinet meeting, and as I was authorized to tell him this I gave him a memorandum of it.

This broad hint caused Prince Lichnowsky, who had instructions to move every lever to hold Great Britain back, to realize how near was the fatal parting of the ways. Accordingly, he bestirred himself once more.

He asked me (the Foreign Secretary continues) whether if Germany gave a promise not to violate Belgian neutrality we would engage to remain neutral.

I replied that I could not say that; our hands were still free, and we were considering what our attitude should be. All I could say was that our attitude would be determined largely by public opinion here, and that the neutrality of Belgium would appeal very strongly to public opinion here. I did not think that we could give a promise of neutrality on that condition alone.

Naturally. For that condition took no account of France.

Dismayed at the tumbling of the house of cards put together by his Government, the

Ambassador made a final appeal to Sir Edward Grey :

The Ambassador pressed me as to whether I could not formulate conditions on which we would remain neutral. He even suggested that the integrity of France and her colonies might be guaranteed.

I said that I felt obliged to refuse definitely any promise to remain neutral on similar terms, and I could only say that we must keep our hands free.

On Monday, August 3rd, these data were communicated to the House of Commons by the Secretary for Foreign Affairs in a masterly speech marked by moderation and reserve. He laid before the House all the data available for a judgment and decision, understating, as is his wont, the case for such a solution as he himself might be apt to favour.

It now appears (he said) from the news I have received to-day, which has come quite recently—and I am not yet quite sure how far it has reached me in an accurate form—that an ultimatum has been given to Belgium by Germany, the object of which was to offer Belgium friendly relations with Germany on condition that she would facilitate the passage of German troops through Belgium. Well, until one has these things absolutely definitely up to the last moment, I do not wish to say all that one would say if one was in a position to give the House full, complete, and absolute information upon the point. We were sounded once in the course of last week as to whether if a guarantee was given that after the war Belgian integrity would be preserved

that would content us. We replied that we could not bargain away whatever interests or obligations we had in Belgian neutrality. Shortly before I reached the House I was informed that the following telegram had been received from the King of the Belgians by King George :

> " Remembering the numerous proofs of your Majesty's friendship and that of your predecessor, and the friendly attitude of England in 1870, and the proof of friendship you have just given us again, I make a supreme appeal to the diplomatic intervention of your Majesty's Government to safeguard the integrity of Belgium."

Diplomatic intervention took place last week on our part. What can diplomatic intervention do now? We have great and vital interests in the independence of Belgium, and integrity is the least part. If Belgium is compelled to allow her neutrality to be violated, of course the situation is clear. Even if by agreement she admitted the violation of her neutrality, it is clear she could only do so under duress. The smaller States in that region of Europe ask but one thing : their one desire is that they should be left alone and independent. The one thing they fear is, I think, not so much that their integrity should be interfered with, but their independence. If in this war which is before Europe one of the combatants should violate its neutrality and no action should be taken to resent it, at the end of the war, whatever the integrity may be, the independence will be gone. I have one further quotation from Mr. Gladstone as to what he thought about the independence of Belgium. He said :

> "We have an interest in the independence of Belgium which is wider than that we have in the literal operation of the guarantee. It is found in the answer to the question whether under the circumstances of the case this country, endowed as it is with influence and power, would quietly stand by and witness the perpetration of the direst crime that ever stained the pages of history, and thus become participators in the sin."

Now if it be the case that there has been anything in the nature of an ultimatum to Belgium, asking her to compromise or violate her neutrality, whatever may have been offered to her in return, her independence is gone if that holds, and if her independence goes, the independence of Holland will follow.

As yet, however, there was nothing solid in the way either of a declaration of Germany's policy or of an ascertained breach of Belgium's neutrality to go upon. And the Foreign Secretary was careful to make this clear:

> Now (he said) I have put the question of Belgium somewhat hypothetically, because I am not yet sure of all the facts, but if the facts turn out to be as they have reached us at present, it is quite clear that there is an obligation on this country to do its utmost to prevent the consequences to which those facts will lead if they are undisputed.

Meanwhile, the British Ambassador in Berlin had kept on pressing for an answer to what was indeed a Sphinx question—the scrap of paper—for the Kaiser, whose diagnosis of the British

character, fitfully tested and modified by the official despatches daily pouring in upon him, played a material part in swaying his appreciation of the situation, and together with it his decision. The bearings of this decision were twofold—political and military. Germany might dispense with the strategic advantages which the route through Belgium offered her army under one of two conditions: either if the odds against France were sufficient to enable her to count upon an easy victory, or if the political disadvantages that would accrue to her from a violation of the Treaty of 1839 outweighed the military facilities it would secure her. And it was for the purpose of settling this preliminary point and allowing her to choose whichever course offered her the greatest inducements that Prince Lichnowsky put the question whether the British Government would engage to remain neutral if Germany promised to observe the terms of the Treaty. And when, this attempt having failed to elicit a definite assurance, he pressed Sir Edward Grey to formulate conditions which would buy our neutrality, the British Secretary of State virtually told him that it was not for sale.

This straightforward way of meeting the stratagem by which our hands were to be fettered, while Germany was to be free to choose whichever alternative best suited her, clinched the matter in the Kaiser's mind, if we may judge by the

closing conversations between his Ministers in Berlin and our Ambassador.

Sir Edward Goschen describes these final scenes of the historic game of "hedging" in words which will be remembered as long as the British Empire stands:

In accordance with the instructions contained in your telegram of the 4th inst. (he writes) I called upon the Secretary of State that afternoon and inquired, in the name of his Majesty's Government, whether the Imperial Government would refrain from violating Belgian neutrality. Herr von Jagow at once replied that he was sorry to say that his answer must be "No," as, in consequence of the German troops having crossed the frontier that morning, Belgian neutrality had been already violated. Herr von Jagow again went into the reasons why the Imperial Government had been obliged to take this step, namely, that they had to advance into France by the quickest and easiest way, so as to be able to get well ahead with their operations and endeavour to strike some decisive blow as early as possible.

It was a matter of life and death for them, as if they had gone by the more southern route they could not have hoped, in view of the paucity of roads and the strength of the fortresses, to have got through without formidable opposition entailing great loss of time. This loss of time would have meant time gained by the Russians for bringing up their troops to the German frontier. Rapidity of action was the great German asset, while that of Russia was an inexhaustible supply of troops. I pointed out to Herr von Jagow that this *fait accompli* of the violation of the Belgian frontier rendered, as he would readily understand, the situation exceed-

ingly grave, and I asked him whether there was not still time to draw back and avoid possible consequences, which both he and I would deplore. He replied that, for the reasons he had given me, it was now impossible for them to draw back.

Thus the die was cast. An accomplished fact was created which could not, it was urged, be undone. It was now unhappily too late, just as it had been too late to stay Austria's invasion of Servia. But at least reasons could still be offered in explanation of the stroke, and it was hoped that Great Britain might own that they were forcible. The Germans "had to advance into France by the quickest and easiest way, and they could not have got through by the other route without formidable opposition entailing great loss of time." And the German army was in a hurry.

During the afternoon (continues the British Ambassador) I received your further telegram of the same date, and, in compliance with the instructions therein contained, I again proceeded to the Imperial Foreign Office, and informed the Secretary of State that unless the Imperial Government could give the assurance by twelve o'clock that night that they would proceed no further with their violation of the Belgian frontier and stop their advance, I had been instructed to demand my passports and inform the Imperial Government that his Majesty's Government would have to take all steps in their power to uphold the neutrality of Belgium and the observance of a treaty to which Germany was as much a party as themselves.

Herr von Jagow replied that to his great regret he could give no other answer than that which he had given me earlier in the day, namely, that the safety of the Empire rendered it absolutely necessary that the Imperial troops should advance through Belgium. I gave his Excellency a written summary of your telegram, and, pointing out that you had mentioned twelve o'clock as the time when his Majesty's Government would expect an answer, asked him whether, in view of the terrible consequences which would necessarily ensue, it were not possible even at the last moment that their answer should be reconsidered. He replied that if the time given were even twenty-four hours or more, his answer must be the same.

I said that in that case I should have to demand my passports. This interview took place at about seven o'clock. In a short conversation which ensued Herr von Jagow expressed his poignant regret at the crumbling of his entire policy and that of the Chancellor, which had been to make friends with Great Britain, and then, through Great Britain, to get closer to France. I said that this sudden end to my work in Berlin was to me also a matter of deep regret and disappointment, but that he must understand that under the circumstances and in view of our engagements, his Majesty's Government could not possibly have acted otherwise than they had done.

I then said that I should like to go and see the Chancellor, as it might be, perhaps, the last time I should have an opportunity of seeing him. He begged me to do so. I found the Chancellor very agitated. His Excellency at once began a harangue, which lasted for about twenty minutes. He said that the step taken by his Majesty's Government was

terrible to a degree ; just for a word—" neutrality," a word which in war-time had so often been disregarded—just for a scrap of paper Great Britain was going to make war on a kindred nation who desired nothing better than to be friends with her. All his efforts in that direction had been rendered useless by this last terrible step, and the policy to which, as I knew, he had devoted himself since his accession to office had tumbled down like a house of cards. What we had done was unthinkable ; it was like striking a man from behind while he was fighting for his life against two assailants. He held Great Britain responsible for all the terrible events that might happen.

I protested strongly against that statement, and said that, in the same way as he and Herr von Jagow wished me to understand that for strategical reasons it was a matter of life and death to Germany to advance through Belgium and violate the latter's neutrality, so I would wish him to understand that it was, so to speak, a matter of " life and death " for the honour of Great Britain that she should keep her solemn engagement to do her utmost to defend Belgium's neutrality if attacked. That solemn compact simply had to be kept, or what confidence could anyone have in engagements given by Great Britain in the future ? The Chancellor said, " But at what price will that compact have been kept ? Has the British Government thought of that ? " I hinted to his Excellency as plainly as I could that fear of consequences could hardly be regarded as an excuse for breaking solemn engagements, but his Excellency was so excited, so evidently overcome by the news of our action, and so little disposed to hear reason, that I refrained from adding fuel to the flame by further argument.

As I was leaving he said that the blow of Great Britain joining Germany's enemies was all the greater that almost up to the last moment he and his Government had been working with us and supporting our efforts to maintain peace between Austria and Russia. I said that this was part of the tragedy which saw the two nations fall apart just at the moment when the relations between them had been more friendly and cordial than they had been for years. Unfortunately, notwithstanding our efforts to maintain peace between Russia and Austria, the war had spread, and had brought us face to face with a situation which, if we held to our engagements, we could not possibly avoid, and which unfortunately entailed our separation from our late fellow-workers. He would readily understand that no one regretted this more than I.

After this somewhat painful interview I returned to the Embassy, and drew up a telegraphic report of what had passed. This telegram was handed in at the Central Telegraph Office a little before nine p.m. It was accepted by that office, but apparently never despatched.

At about 9.30 p.m. Herr von Zimmermann, the Under-Secretary of State, came to see me. After expressing his deep regret that the very friendly official and personal relations between us were about to cease, he asked me casually whether a demand for passports was equivalent to a declaration of war. I said that such an authority on international law as he was known to be must know as well or better than I what was usual in such cases. I added that there were many cases where diplomatic relations had been broken off, and, nevertheless, war had not ensued; but that in this case he would have seen from my instructions, of which I had given Herr von Jagow

a written summary, that his Majesty's Government expected an answer to a definite question by twelve o'clock that night, and that in default of a satisfactory answer they would be forced to take such steps as their engagements required. Herr Zimmermann said that that was, in fact, a declaration of war, as the Imperial Government could not possibly give the assurance required either that night or any other night.

CHAPTER XI

JUST FOR "A SCRAP OF PAPER"

"JUST for neutrality—a word which in war-time had so often been disregarded—just for a scrap of paper, Great Britain was going to make war on a kindred nation."

The frame of mind which generated this supreme unconcern for the feelings of the Belgians, this matter-of-fact contempt for the inviolability of a country's plighted word, gives us the measure of the abyss which sunders the old-world civilization, based on all that is loftiest in Christianity, from modern German culture. From this revolutionary principle, the right to apply which, however, is reserved to Germany alone, radiate wholly new conceptions of right and wrong, truth and falsehood, plain and double dealing, which are destructive of the very groundwork of all organized society. Some forty or fifty years ago it was a doctrine confined to Prussia of the Hohenzollerns: to-day it is the creed of the Prussianized German Empire.

Frederic the Great practised it without scruple

or shame. It was he who, having given Maria Theresa profuse assurances of help should her title to the Habsburg throne ever be questioned by any other State, got together a powerful army as secretly as he could, invaded her territory, and precipitated a sanguinary European war. Yet he had guaranteed the integrity of the Austrian Empire. What were his motives? He himself has avowed them openly: "ambition, interest, and a yearning to move people to talk about me were the mainsprings of my action." And this wanton war was made without any formal declaration, without any quarrel, without any grievance. He was soon joined by other Powers, with whom he entered into binding engagements. But as soon as he was able to conclude an advantageous peace with the Austrian Empress, he abandoned his allies and signed a treaty. This document, like the former one, he soon afterwards treated as a mere scrap of paper, and again attacked the Austrian Empire. And this was the man who wrote a laboured refutation of the pernicious teachings of Machiavelli, under the title of "Anti-Machiavel"!

Now, Frederic the Great is the latter-day Germans' ideal of a monarch. His infamous practices were the concrete nucleus around which the subversive Pan-Germanic doctrines of to-day gathered and hardened into the political creed of a race. What the Hohenzollerns did for Prussia, Prussia under the same Hohenzollerns has effected for Germany, where not merely the

Kaiser and his Government, or the officials, or the officers of the army and navy, or the professors and the journalists, but the clergy, the socialists, nay, all thinking classes of the population, are infected with the virus of the fell Prussian disease which threatens the old-world civilization with decomposition.

To this danger humanity cannot afford to be either indifferent or lenient. It may and will be extremely difficult to extirpate the malady, but the Powers now arrayed against aggressive and subversive Teutonism should see to it that the nations affected shall be made powerless to spread it.

The sheet-anchor of new Germany's faith is her own exclusive right to tear up treaties, violate agreements, and trample the laws of humanity underfoot. To no other Power, however great its temptation, however pressing its needs, is this privilege to be extended. Belgian neutrality is but a word to be disregarded—by Germany; a solemn treaty is but a scrap of paper to be flung into the basket—by Germany; but woe betide any other Power who should venture to turn Germany's methods against herself! Now that Japan has begun operations against German Tsingtao, the Kaiser's Minister in Pekin promptly protested against the alleged violation of Chinese neutrality which it involved. Sacred are all those engagements by which Germany stands to gain some advantage, and it is the duty of the civilized world to enforce them. All

others which are inconvenient to the Teuton he may toss aside as scraps of paper.

To the threats that China would be held responsible for injury to German property following on the Japanese operations, unless she withstood the Japanese by force, the Pekin Government administered a neatly worded lesson. If the Pekin Government, the Foreign Minister replied, were to oppose the landing of the Japanese on the ground that the territory in question belongs to China, it would likewise be her duty to drive out the Germans for the same reason, Tsingtao also being Chinese. Moreover, Tsingtao had only been leased to Germany for a term of years, and, according to the scrap of paper, ought never to have been fortified, seeing that this constituted a flagrant violation of China's neutrality. These arguments are unanswerable, even from Germany's point of view. But the Kaiser still maintains that he has right on his side! Deutschland über Alles!

With a people whose reasoning powers show as little respect for the laws of logic as their armies evince for the laws of humanity or their press for truth, it would be idle to argue. Psychologically, however, it is curious to observe the attitude of the body of German theologians towards the scrap of paper. Psychologically, but also for a more direct reason: because of the unwarranted faith which the British people are so apt to place in the German people's sense of truth and justice, and more particularly in the fairmindedness of

their clergy. Well, this clergy, in its most eminent representatives, does indeed expend strong adjectives in its condemnation—not of the Kaiser's crime, but of Belgian atrocities!

This is how German divines propound the rights and wrongs of the Belgian episode to Evangelical Christians abroad:

> Unnameable horrors have been committed against Germans living peaceably abroad—against women and children, against wounded and physicians—cruelties and shamelessness such as many a heathen and Mohammedan war has not revealed. Are these the fruits, by which the non-Christian peoples are to recognize whose disciples the Christian nations are? Even the not unnatural excitement of a people, whose neutrality—*already violated by our adversaries—could under the pressure of implacable necessity* not be respected, affords no excuse for inhumanities, nor does it lessen the shame that such could take place in a land long ago christianized.

If Ministers of the Gospel thus tamper with truth and ignore elementary justice and humanity, can one affect surprise at the mischievous inventions of professional journalists?

This strange blending of religion with mendacity, of culture with humanity, of scientific truth with political subterfuge, reads like a chapter in cerebral pathology. The savage military organism against which a veritable crusade is now being carried on by the peace-loving, law-abiding nations of Europe has been aptly characterized as "the thing which all free civilization

has learned to loathe like a vampire: the conscienceless, ruthless, godless might of a self-centred militarism, to which honour is a word, chivalry a weakness, and bullying aggression the breath of life."*

It is a relief to turn from the quibbles, subterfuges, and downright falsehoods that characterize the campaign of German diplomacy to the dignified message which the King-Emperor recently addressed to the Princes and Peoples of that India which our enemies hoped would rise up in arms against British rule.

To the Princes and Peoples of my Indian Empire:

During the past few weeks the peoples of my whole Empire at home and overseas have moved with one mind and purpose to confront and overthrow an unparalleled assault upon the continuity of civilization and the peace of mankind.

The calamitous conflict is not of my seeking. My voice has been cast throughout on the side of peace. My Ministers earnestly strove to allay the causes of strife and to appease differences with which my Empire was not concerned.

Had I stood aside when in defiance of pledges to which my Kingdom was a party the soil of Belgium was violated, and her cities laid desolate, when the very life of the French nation was threatened with extinction, I should have sacrificed my honour and given to destruction the liberties of my Empire and of mankind. I rejoice that every part of the Empire is with me in this decision.

* *Daily Telegraph.*

Paramount regard for treaty faith and the pledged word of rulers and peoples is the common heritage of England and of India.

Among the many incidents that have marked the unanimous uprising of the populations of my Empire in defence of its unity and integrity, nothing has moved me more than the passionate devotion to my Throne expressed both by my Indian subjects and by the Feudatory Princes and the Ruling Chiefs of India, and their prodigal offers of their lives and their resources in the cause of the Realm.

Their one-voiced demand to be foremost in the conflict has touched my heart, and has inspired to the highest issues the love and devotion which, as I well know, have ever linked my Indian subjects and myself.

I recall to mind India's gracious message to the British nation of goodwill and fellowship, which greeted my return in February, 1912, after the solemn ceremony of my Coronation Durbar at Delhi, and I find in this hour of trial a full harvest and a noble fulfilment of the assurance given by you that the destinies of Great Britain and India are indissolubly linked.

The history of the Kaiser's dealings with Belgium is but a single episode in the long series of lessons taught us by German militarism, with its two sets of weights and measures and its Asiatic maxims of foreign policy. The paramount interest of this incident is to be ascribed to the circumstance that it marks the central moment of the collision between Germany and Britain. It also struck a keynote of difference between the new Pan-Germanic code of morals

and the old one still common to the remainder of the human race. Lastly, it opened the eyes of the purblind in this country and made them see at last.

Belgium and Luxemburg are neutral States, and all Europe is bound to respect their neutrality. But this obligation in the case of Prussia is made more sacred and more stringent still by the circumstance that she herself is one of the guarantors of that neutrality. Not only is she obliged to refrain from violating Belgian territory, but it is her duty to hinder, with force if necessary, a breach by other nations. This twofold obligation Germany set at naught, and then affected wonder at the surprise of her neighbours. "By necessity we have occupied Luxemburg, and perhaps have already entered Belgian territory," the Chancellor said calmly. "This is an infraction of international law. . . . We are . . . compelled to overrule the legitimate protest of the Luxemburg and Belgian Governments. We shall repair the wrong we are doing as soon as our military aims have been achieved." Military aims annul treaties, military necessities know no law, and the slaughter of tens of thousands of peaceable citizens and the destruction of their mediæval monuments constitute a wrong which "we Germans shall repair as soon as our military aims are achieved."

In such matter-of-fact way this German Bayard, as he once was called by his English admirers, undertakes, if he be allowed to break two

promises, that he will make a third by way of compensation.

Not content with having brought six Powers into line against her destructive doctrines and savage practices, Germany would fain throw the blame for the war now on Great Britain, now on Russia. Here, again, it is the Imperial Chancellor who propounds the thesis. On September 12th he sent the following curious statement to the Danish Press Bureau for publication :—

The English Prime Minister, in his Guildhall speech, reserved to England the rôle of protector of the smaller and weaker States, and spoke about the neutrality of Holland, Belgium, and Switzerland as being exposed to danger from the side of Germany. It is true that we have broken Belgium's neutrality because bitter necessity compelled us to do so, but we promised Belgium full indemnity and integrity if she would take account of this state of necessity. If so, she would not have suffered any damage, as, for example, Luxemburg. If England, as protector of the weaker States, had wished to spare Belgium infinite suffering she should have advised Belgium to accept our offer. England has not "protected" Belgium, so far as we know; I wonder, therefore, whether it can really be said that England is such a disinterested protector.

We knew perfectly well that the French plan of campaign involved a march through Belgium to attack the unprotected Rhineland. Does anyone believe England would have interfered to protect Belgian freedom against France?

We have firmly respected the neutrality of Holland

and Switzerland ; we have also avoided the slightest violation of the frontier of the Dutch province of Limburg.

It is strange that Mr. Asquith only mentioned the neutrality of Belgium, Holland, and Switzerland, but not that of the Scandinavian countries. He might have mentioned Switzerland with reference to France, but Holland and Belgium are situated close to England on the opposite side of the Channel, and that is why England is so concerned for the neutrality of these countries.

Why is Mr. Asquith silent about the Scandinavian countries ? Perhaps because he knows that it does not enter our head to touch these countries' neutrality ; or would England possibly not consider Denmark's neutrality as a *noli me tangere* for an advance in the Baltic or for Russia's warlike operations ?

Mr. Asquith wishes people to believe that England's fight against us is a fight of freedom against might. The world is accustomed to this manner of expression. In the name of freedom England, with might and with the most recklessly egotistic policy, has founded her mighty Colonial Empire, in the name of freedom she has destroyed for a century the independence of the Boer Republics, in the name of freedom she now treats Egypt as an English colony and thereby violates international treaties and solemn promises, in the name of freedom one after another of the Malay States is losing its independence for England's benefit, in the name of freedom she tries, by cutting German cables, to prevent the truth being spread in the world.

The English Prime Minister is mistaken. When England joined with Russia and Japan against Ger-

many she, with a blindness unique in the history of the world, betrayed civilization and handed over to the German sword the care of freedom for European peoples and States.

The Germanistic conceptions of veracity and common honesty which this plea reveals makes one feel the new air that breathes over every department of the national cult—the air blowing from the borderland between the sphere of high scientific achievement and primeval barbarism. One is puzzled and amused by the solemn statement that if Germany has ridden rough shod over the rights of Belgium, she has committed no such breach of law against Holland, Denmark, and other small states. "We have firmly respected the neutrality of Holland and Switzerland." It is as though an assassin should say: "True, I killed Brown, whose money I needed sorely. But at least give me credit for not having murdered Jones and Smith, who possess nothing that I could carry away at present, and whose goodwill was essential to the success of my stroke"!

The violation of Belgium's neutrality was part of Germany's plan of campaign against France. This fact was known long ago. It was implicitly confessed in the official answer given to Sir Edward Goschen's question on the subject. Yet on Sunday, August 2nd, the German military Attaché in Brussels, in conversation with the Belgian War Minister, exclaimed: "I cannot, for the life of me, understand what you mean by mobilizing.

Have you anything to fear? Is not your neutrality guaranteed?" It was, but only by a scrap of paper. For a few hours later the Belgian Government received the German ultimatum.* On the following day Germany had begun to "hack her way" through treaty rights and the laws of humanity. The document published by the Chancellor is the mirror of German moral teaching and practice.

The reply to it, issued by the British Press Bureau, with the authority of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, is worth reproducing:

"Does anyone believe," asks the German Chancellor, "that England would have interfered to protect Belgian freedom against France?"

The answer is that she would unquestionably have done so. Sir Edward Grey, as recorded in the White Paper, asked the French Government "whether it was prepared to engage to respect the neutrality of Belgium so long as no other Power violates it." The French Government replied that they were resolved to respect it. The assurance, it was added, had been given several times, and formed the subject of conversation between President Poincaré and the King of the Belgians.

The German Chancellor entirely ignores the fact that England took the same line about Belgian neutrality in 1870 that she has taken now. In 1870 Prince Bismarck, when approached by England on the subject, admitted and respected the treaty obligations in relation to Belgium. The British Government stands in 1914 as it stood in 1870; it

* *Le Soir*, August 9th; *La Metropole*, August 8th, 1914.

is Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg who refused to meet us in 1914 as Prince Bismarck met us in 1870.

"Not Very Tactful."

The Imperial Chancellor finds it strange that Mr. Asquith in his Guildhall speech did not mention the neutrality of the Scandinavian countries, and suggests that the reason for the omission was some sinister design on England's part. It is impossible for any public speaker to cover the whole ground in each speech.

The German Chancellor's reference to Denmark and other Scandinavian countries can hardly be considered very tactful. With regard to Denmark, the Danes are not likely to have forgotten the parts played by Prussia and England respectively in 1863-4, when the Kingdom of Denmark was dismembered. And the integrity of Norway and Sweden was guaranteed by England and France in the Treaty of Stockholm in 1855.

The Imperial Chancellor refers to the dealings of Great Britain with the Boer Republics, and suggests that she has been false therein to the cause of freedom.

Without going into controversies now happily past, we may recall what General Botha said in the South African Parliament a few days ago, when expressing his conviction of the righteousness of Britain's cause and explaining the firm resolve of the South African Union to aid her in every possible way: "Great Britain had given them a Constitution under which they could create a great nationality, and had ever since regarded them as a free people and as a sister State. Although there might be many who in the past had been hostile towards

the British flag, he could vouch for it that they would ten times rather be under the British than under the German flag."

Colonial Loyalty.

The German Chancellor is equally unfortunate in his references to the "Colonial Empire." So far from British policy having been "recklessly egotistic," it has resulted in a great rally of affection and common interest by all the British Dominions and Dependencies, among which there is not one which is not aiding Britain by soldiers or other contributions or both in this war.

With regard to the matter of treaty obligations generally, the German Chancellor excuses the breach of Belgian neutrality by military necessity—at the same time making a virtue of having respected the neutrality of Holland and Switzerland, and saying that it does not enter his head to touch the neutrality of the Scandinavian countries. A virtue which admittedly is only practised in the absence of temptation from self-interest and military advantage does not seem greatly worth vaunting.

To the Chancellor's concluding statement that "To the German sword" is entrusted "the care of freedom for European peoples and States," the treatment of Belgium is a sufficient answer.

Passing summarily in review the causes of the war touched upon in the foregoing pages, the reader will have discerned that the true interest of the story of the scrap of paper lies in the insight it affords the world into the growth, spread, and popularization of the greatest of human conceptions possible to a gifted people,

whose religious faith has been diverted to the wildest of political ideals and whose national conscience has been fatally warped. For the Germans are a highly dowered, virile race, capable, under favourable conditions, of materially furthering the progress of humanity. In every walk of science, art, and literature they have been in the van. Their poetry is part of the world's inheritance. Their philosophy at its highest level touches that of ancient Greece. Their music is unmatched. In chemistry and medicine they have laboured unceasingly and with results which will never be forgotten. Into the dry bones of theology they have infused the spirit of life and movement. In the pursuit of commerce they have deployed a degree of ingenuity, suppleness, and enterprise which was rewarded and may be summarized by the result that, during the twelve years ending in 1906, their imports and exports increased by nearly one hundred per cent.

But the national genius, of which those splendid achievements are the fruits, has been yoked to the chariot of war in a cause which is dissolvent of culture, trust, humanity, and of all the foundations of organized society. That cause is the paramountcy of their race, the elevation of Teutonism to the height occupied among mortals by Nietzsche's Over-man, whose will is the one reality, and whose necessities and desires are above all law. Around this root-idea a vast politico-racial system, partaking of the nature

of a new religion, has been elaborately built up by the non-German Prussians, and accepted and assimilated by a docile people which was sadly deficient in the political sense. And it is for the purpose of forcing this poisonous creed and its corollaries upon Europe and the world that the most tremendous war of history is now being waged. This remarkable movement had long ago been studied and described by a few well-informed and courageous British observers, but the true issues have been for the first time revealed to the dullest apprehension by the historic episode of the scrap of paper.

It is only fair to own that the Prussianized Germans have fallen from their high estate, and become what they are solely in consequence of the shifting of their faith from the spiritual to the political and military sphere. Imbued with the new spirit, which is impatient of truth when truth becomes an obstacle to success, as it is of law when law becomes a hindrance to national aims, they have parted company with morality to enlist in the service of a racial revival based on race hatred. Pan-Germanism is a quasi-religious cult, and its upholders are fanatics, persuaded of the righteousness of their cause, and resolved, irrespective of the cost, to help it to triumph.

The non-German State, Prussia, was the bearer of this exclusively Germanic "culture." It fitted in with the set of the national mind, which lacked political ideals. Austria, however, occu-

pied a position apart in this newest and most grandiose of latter-day religions. She was but a tool in the hands of her mighty co-partner. "The future," wrote the national historian Treitschke, "belongs to Germany, with whom Austria, if she desires to survive, must link herself." And the instinct of self-preservation determined her to throw in her lot with Prussianized Germany. But even then, it is only fair to say that Austria's conception of her functions differed widely from that of her overbearing Mentor. Composed of a medley of nationalities, she eschewed the odious practice of denationalizing her Slav, Italian, and Roumanian peoples in the interests of Teutondom. One and all they were allowed to retain their language, cultivate their nationality, and, when feasible, to govern themselves. But, congruously with the subordinate rôle that fell to her, she played but a secondary part in the preliminaries to the present conflict. Germany, who at first acted as the unseen adviser, emerged at the second stage as principal.

We cannot too constantly remember the *mise en scène* of the present world-drama. Germany and Austria were dissatisfied with the Treaty of Bucharest, and resolved to treat it as a contemptible scrap of paper. They were to effect such a redistribution of territory as would enable them to organize a Balkan Federation under their own auspices and virtual suzerainty. The assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand

offered them a splendid opening. On pretext of punishing the real assassins and eradicating the causes of the evil, Austria was to mutilate Servia and wedge her in among Germanophile Balkan States. The plan was kept secret from every other Power, even from the Italian ally—so secret, indeed, that the Russian Ambassador in Vienna was encouraged to take leave of absence, just when the ultimatum was about to be presented, which he did. The German Kaiser, while claiming to be a mere outsider, as uninitiated as everybody else, was a party to the drafting of the ultimatum, which, according to his own Ministers, went the length of demanding of Servia the impossible. That document was avowedly intended to provoke armed resistance, and when it was rumoured that the Serbs were about to accept it integrally, Austrians and Germans were dismayed. It was the Kaiser himself who had the time-limit for an answer cut down to forty-eight hours in order to hinder diplomatic negociations; and it was the Kaiser's Ministers who, having had Sir Edward Grey's conciliatory proposals rejected, expressed their sincere regret that, owing to the shortness of the time-limit, they had come too late.

When the Belgrade Government returned a reply which was fitted to serve as a basis for an arrangement, it was rejected by the Austrian Minister almost before he could have read it through. While the Kaiser in his letter to the Tsar, and the Imperial Chancellor in his talks

with our Ambassador, were lavishing assurances that they were working hard to hold Austria back, the German Ambassador in Vienna, through whom they were thus claiming to put pressure on their ally, was openly advocating war with Servia, and emphatically declaring that Russia would have to stand aside. At the same moment Germany's military preparations were secretly being pushed forward. But Austria, perceiving at last that the Germans' estimate of Russia's weakness was unfounded, and she herself faced with the nearing perils of an awful conflict with the great Slav Empire, drew back and agreed to submit the contentious points to mediation. Thereupon Germany sprang forward, and, without taking the slightest account of the Servian question, presented twelve-hour ultimatums to Russia and to France. Thus the thin pretension that she was but an ally, bound by the sacredness of treaty obligations to help her assailed co-partner, was cynically thrown aside, and she stood forth in her true colours as the real aggressor.

In her forecast of the war which she had thus deliberately brought about the sheet-anchor of her hope of success was Great Britain's neutrality And on this she had built her scheme. Hence her solicitude that, at any rate, this postulate should not be shaken. Her infamous offer to secure it was one of the many expedients to which her Kaiser and his statesmen had recourse. But they had misread the British character. Their

fatal misjudgment marks the fundamental divergence in ethical thought and feeling between the "culture" of Teutonism and the old-world civilization represented by Great Britain. They lack the ethical sense with which to perceive the motives which inspired the attitude of this country. They are able to understand and appreciate a war of revenge or a war of conquest, but they are incapable of conceiving the workings of a national mind which can undertake a costly and bloody war merely to uphold the sacredness of a treaty—a war for a mere scrap of paper.

In engineering this war of wanton aggression Germany committed one capital mistake—a result of the atrophy of her moral sense: she failed to gauge the ethical soul of the British people. She neither anticipated nor adequately prepared for the adhesion of Great Britain to France and Russia. And to ward off this peril when it became visible she was ready to make heavy sacrifices—for the moment. One of these was embodied in the promise not to annex any portion of French territory. But here, again, this undertaking would not have hindered her from encouraging Italy to incorporate Nice and Savoy, as an inducement to lend a hand in the campaign. Her assumption that England would not budge was based largely on the impending civil war in Ireland, the trouble caused by the suffragettes, the spread of disaffection in India and Egypt, and above all on the paramountcy of

a Radical peace party in Great Britain which was firmly opposed to war, loathed Russian autocracy, and contemplated with dismay the prospect of Russian victories. These favourable influences were then reinforced by the vague promise to conclude a convention of neutrality with Great Britain at some future time on lines to be worked out later, by the undertaking to abstain from *annexing* French territory in Europe, and at last by the German Ambassador's suggestion that the British Government should itself name the price at which Britain's neutrality during the present war and her connivance at a deliberate breach of treaty could be purchased.

That all these promises and promises of promises should have proved abortive, and that Austria and Germany should have to take on France, Russia, and Great Britain when they hoped to be able to confine their attentions to little Servia, was gall and wormwood to the Kaiser's shifty advisers. For it constituted a superlatively bad start for the vaster campaign, of which the Servian Expedition was meant to be but the early overture. A new start already seems desirable, and overtures for the purpose of obtaining it were made by the German Ambassador at Washington, who suggested that the war should be called a draw and terms of peace suggested by Great Britain. But the allies had already bound themselves to make no separate peace, and their own interests oblige them to continue the campaign until Prussian militarism

and all that it stands for have been annihilated. None the less, it is nowise improbable that as soon as the allies have scored such successes as may seem to bar Germany's way to final and decisive victory, she may endeavour, through the good offices of the United States, to obtain peace on such terms as would allow her to recommence her preparations on a vaster scale than ever before, amend her schemes, correct her mistakes, and make a fresh start when her resources become adequate to the magnitude of her undertaking. And if the allies were ill-advised or sluggish enough to close with any such offers, they would be endeavouring to overtake their Fate and to deserve it. What would a peace treaty be worth, one may ask, as an instrument of moral obligation if the nation which is expected to abide by it treats it on principle as a scrap of paper? There can be no peace except a permanent peace, and that can be bought only by demolishing the organization which compelled all Europe to live in a state of latent warfare. As Mr. Lloyd George tersely put it: "If there are nations that say they will only respect treaties when it is to their interests to do so,we must make it to their interests to do so." And until we have accomplished this there can be no thought of slackening our military and naval activity.

One word more about German methods. Intelligent co-ordination of all endeavours and their concentration on one and the same object

is the essence of their method and the secret of their success. German diplomacy is cleverly and continuously aided by German journalism, finance, industry, commerce, literature, art, and—religion. Thus, when the Government think it necessary, and therefore right, to break an international convention, violate the laws of war, or declare a treaty a mere scrap of paper, they charge the State on whose rights they are preparing to trespass with some offence which would explain and palliate, if not justify, their illegality. It was thus that the German Secretary of State, when asked by our Ambassador whether the neutrality of Belgium would be respected, said evasively that certain hostile acts had already been committed by Belgium—i.e. before the end of July! In the same way, tales of Belgian cruelty towards German soldiers and German *women*—as though these, too, had invaded King Albert's dominions—were disseminated to palliate the crimes against Louvain, Malines, and Termonde. And now Great Britain is accused of employing dum-dum bullets by the Kaiser, whose soldiers take hostages and execute them, put Belgian women and children in the first firing line, whose sailors are laying mines in the high seas, and whose most honest statesmen are industriously disseminating deliberate forgeries among neutral peoples. Prince Bülow, the ex-Chancellor, in an appeal to civilized peoples for their sympathy with Germany in this iniquitous war, operates with the forged

speech mendaciously attributed to Mr. John Burns, in which England is accused of having assailed Germany from behind out of brutal jealousy and perpetrated the crime of high treason against the white races!

The present Imperial Chancellor, von Bethmann Hollweg, reputed to be the most veracious public man in Germany, has quite recently issued a memorial for the purpose of substantiating the charges of atrocity levelled against Belgians as a set-off to German savagery in Louvain, Malines, and elsewhere. The Chancellor relies upon the evidence of one Hermann Consten, a Swiss subject and a member of the Swiss Red Cross Society, a gentleman, therefore, whose political disinterestedness entitles him to be heard, and whose presence at Liége during the siege is an adequate voucher for his excellent source of information.

But inquiry has elicited the facts that the description of this witness given by the honest Chancellor is wholly untrue. The Chief of Police at Basle, in Switzerland, has since testified that Consten is a German, that he conducted a German agency in Basle which is believed to have been an espionage concern, that he was charged with fraud, and after a judicial inquiry expelled from Switzerland on September 10th, that he was under police surveillance for two years, that he is not a Swiss subject, nor a member of the Red Cross Society, and that, as he resided in Switzerland during all the time that the siege

of Liége was going on, he could not have seen any of the atrocities he alleges.*

When the Chief of a Government descends to slippery expedients like these to find extenuating circumstances for acts of fiendish savagery that have staggered the world, he is unwittingly endorsing the judgment against which he would fain appeal. And if Germany's most veracious statesman has no scruple to palm off barefaced lies on American and European neutrals, what is one to think of the less truth-loving apostles of Prussian culture?

What we in Great Britain have to expect from Germany, if now or at any future time the anti-Christian cultural religion and inhuman maxims on which her military creed rests get the upper hand, has been depicted in vivid colours by Germans of all professions and political parties. *Delenda est Carthago.* But the very mildest and fairest of all these writers may be quoted to put us on our guard. Professor Ostwald, the well-known German chemist, is a pacifist, a man opposed on principle to war. In a document addressed to American pacifists for their enlightenment as to the aims and scope of the present contest, this bitter adversary of all militarism makes an exception in favour of that of his own country. An enthusiast for civilization, he would gladly

* *Westminster Gazette*, September 22nd.

see that of the British Empire destroyed. He writes :

According to the course of the war up to the present time, European peace seems to me nearer than ever before. We pacifists must only understand that, unhappily, the time was not yet sufficiently developed to establish peace by the peaceful way. If Germany, as everything now seems to make probable, is victorious in the struggle not only with Russia and France, but attains the further end of destroying the source from which for two or three centuries all European strifes have been nourished and intensified, namely, the English policy of World Dominion, then will Germany, fortified on one side by its military superiority, on the other side by the eminently peaceful sentiment of the greatest part of its people, and especially of the German Emperor, dictate peace to the rest of Europe. I hope especially that the future treaty of peace will in the first place provide effectually that a European war such as the present can never again break out.

I hope, moreover, that the Russian people, after the conquest of their armies, will free themselves from Tsarism through an internal movement by which the present political Russia will be resolved into its natural units, namely, Great Russia, the Caucasus, Little Russia, Poland, Siberia, and Finland, to which probably the Baltic Provinces would join themselves. These, I trust, would unite themselves with Finland and Sweden, and perhaps with Norway and Denmark, into a Baltic Federation, which *in close connection with Germany* would ensure European peace and especially form a bulwark against any disposition to war which might remain in Great Russia.

For the other side of the earth I predict a similar development under the leadership of the United States. I assume that the English Dominion will suffer a downfall similar to that which I have predicted for Russia, and that under these circumstances Canada would join the United States, the expanded republic assuming a certain leadership with reference to the South American Republics.

The principle of the absolute sovereignty of the individual nations, which in the present European tumult has proved itself so inadequate and baneful, must be given up and replaced by a system conforming to the world's actual conditions, and especially to those political and economic relations which determine industrial and cultural progress and the common welfare.*

The peace which this distinguished pacifist is so eager to establish on a stable basis can only be attained by the "mailed fist," fortified on one side by its military superiority, and on the other by the eminently peaceful sentiment of the German Emperor. And the means to be employed are the utter destruction of the British Empire and the break-up of Russia into small States under German suzerainty. This is a powerful wrench, but it is not all. The "absolute sovereignty of the individual nations is to be made subordinate to Germany in Europe, and, lest Americans should find fault with the arrangements, to the United States on the new Continent."†

* *Westminster Gazette*, September 18th.

† Ibidem.

No peace treaty with a nation which openly avows and cynically pursues such aims as these by methods, too, which have been universally branded as infamous, would be of any avail. It is essential to the well being of Europe and the continuity of human progress that the political Antichrist, who is waging war against both, shall be vanquished, and that peace shall be concluded only when Prussianized Germany has been reduced to a state of political, military, and naval impotency.

APPENDIX

DIPLOMACY AND THE WAR

THE RUSSIAN ORANGE BOOK

(*From "The Morning Post," September 21st*, 1914)

UNDER the title of "Recueil de Documents Diplomatiques. Négociations ayant précédé la guerre," the Russian Ministry for Foreign Affairs has published at St. Petersburg an important Orange Book giving full details of the diplomatic negociations which preceded the war. Although dated August 6th (July 24th Old Style), it only reached London last evening. The first document is a telegram from M. Strandtman, the Russian Chargé d'Affaires at Belgrade, under date July 23rd, in which he informs the Minister for Foreign Affairs in St. Petersburg that the Austrian Minister has just sent to M. Patchou, who is representing M. Pasitch, the Servian Minister of Finance, at six o'clock in the evening, an ultimatum from his Government, fixing a delay of forty-eight hours for the acceptance of the demands contained in it. M. Pasitch and the other Ministers, who were away on an electioneering tour, had been communicated with, and were expected to return to Belgrade on

Friday morning. M. Patchou added that he asked the aid of Russia, and declared that no Servian Government would be able to accept the demands of Austria. The same day M. Strandtman telegraphed to his Government, stating what were the alleged grievances of the Austro-Hungarian Government against Servia. The Servian Government was to suppress the "criminal and terrorist" propaganda directed against Austria with a view to detaching from the Dual Monarchy the territories composing part of it. Servia was called upon to publish on the first page of the Servian "Official Journal" of July 13th a notice to this effect, while expressing regret for the fatal consequences of these "criminal proceedings."

Austria's Impossible Demands.

Moreover, the Servian Government was to undertake (1) to suppress all publications designed to excite people to hatred and contempt of the Austrian Monarchy; (2) to dissolve at once the "Narodna Odbrana" Society; (3) to eliminate from the curriculum of the public schools anything tending to foment an anti-Austrian propaganda; (4) to dismiss military and civil officers guilty of similar propaganda; (5) to accept the collaboration of Austria in the suppression of the said "subversive movement"; (6) to open a judicial inquiry against the partisans of the conspiracy of June 28th still in Servia; (7) to arrest Commandant Voija Tankositch and Milan Ciganovitch, a Servian official; (8) to

prevent illicit traffic in arms and explosives across the frontier, and dismiss and punish severely the Servian officials at the Schabatz-Loznica frontier guilty of having helped the authors of the crime of Sarajevo by facilitating their passage across the frontier; (9) to give the Austrian Government explanations as to the declarations hostile to Austria made by high Servian officials in interviews after the crime of June 28th; (10) to advise the Austrian Government without delay that the above demands have been complied with. To these demands a satisfactory reply must be given at latest by Saturday, July 25th, at six o'clock in the evening. On the following day, July 24th, the Minister for Foreign Affairs at St. Petersburg sent a telegram to the Russian Chargé d'Affaires at Belgrade, in which he pointed out that the communication of the Austrian Government gave a wholly insufficient length of time to the Powers for dealing with the complications which had arisen. In order to guard against the incalculable consequences, which were equally serious for all the Powers, that might follow from the action of the Austrian Government, it was indispensable first of all that the delay accorded to Servia should be extended. At the same time M. Sazonoff despatched an identical message to the Russian Ambassadors in England, France, Germany, and Italy, in which he said he hoped that the Governments to which they were accredited would support the Russian Government in the view that it took.

Servia's Position.

The Prince Regent of Servia, on the same date, July 24th, wrote to the Emperor of Russia a letter, in which, after referring to the Austrian Note, he said that Servia, recognizing its international duties, at the very first opportunity after the horrible crime, declared that it condemned that crime and was ready to open an inquiry if the complicity of certain Servian subjects should be proved in the course of the investigations made by the Austrian authorities. "However," he continued, "the demands contained in the Austrian Note are unnecessarily humiliating to Servia and incompatible with her dignity as an independent State. We are ready to accept those Austrian conditions which are compatible with the position of a sovereign State as well as any which your Majesty may advise us to accept, and all the persons whose participation in the crime shall be demonstrated will be severely punished by us. Among the demands made by Austria are some which could not be satisfied without certain changes in our legislation, which would require time."

On July 25th the Russian Chargé d'Affaires at Belgrade, in a telegram to his Government, which did not reach Petrograd till July 27th, sent a copy of the Servian reply to the Austrian demands, in which it was stated that Servia had many times given proofs of a pacific and moderate policy during the Balkan crisis. The Servian Government could not accept responsi-

bility for manifestations of a private character such as were contained in newspaper articles and the peaceful work of societies, manifestations which take place in nearly all countries in the ordinary way, and which are not subject to official control. The Servian Government had been painfully surprised at the allegations to the effect that certain persons in Servia had taken part in preparing the crime at Sarajevo.

Assurances and Concessions.

The Servian Government proceeded to repeat its assurance that it was willing to make all efforts to find out the guilty without regard to rank or station, and to punish them for any complicity in that crime; further, the Servian Government transmitted a long announcement, which it undertook to publish on the front page of the *Journal Officiel* of July 26th. It was largely based upon the Austrian demands, and undertook, while formally repudiating all idea of interfering in Austrian affairs, to warn its civil and military authorities, as well as the entire population of the Kingdom, that it would proceed with the utmost severity against all persons who should be guilty of such acts. The Government undertook besides to introduce at the first sitting of the Skupschtina a Press Law enacting severe penalties for any attempt to excite the people to hatred and contempt of the Austrian Monarchy, and it promised that at the forthcoming revision of the Constitution Article 22 should be amended in such a way that such

publications could be confiscated, which under the existing law was impossible. The Government did not possess any proof, and the Note of the Austrian Government did not furnish any proof, that the Narodna Odbrana Society and other similar associations had committed any criminal act. Nevertheless, the Servian Government would accept the demand of the Austrian Government, and would dissolve the Narodna Odbrana Society and any other society which might act in a manner hostile to Austria. Other points on which the Servian Government offered to meet the Austrian demands were the elimination from the curriculum of the Servian public elementary schools of any propaganda against Austria which could be shown to exist, and to dismiss from the Servian service any officers who might be shown to have been guilty of acts directed against the integrity of Austrian territory.

The Servian Government, while protesting that it did not clearly understand the sense and the tendency of the demand of the Austrian Government that it should accept upon its territory the collaboration of the Austrian Government, declared that it was ready to admit any collaboration consistent with the principles of international law and criminal procedure, as well as with neighbourly relations. The Government considered it its duty to open a judicial inquiry with regard to the conspiracy of June 28th, but could not accept the participation of Austrian delegates, as this would involve

the violation of the Servian Constitution. On the very evening, however, of the receipt of the Austrian Note the Government proceeded to arrest Commandant Voija Tankositch. With regard to Milan Ciganovitch, who was an Austrian subject, they had not been able to find him. The Government would undertake to extend the measures taken to prevent the illicit traffic in arms and explosives across the frontier, and would at once order an inquiry and punish severely the frontier officials on the line Schabatz-Loznica who neglected their duty by permitting the passage of the authors of the crime of Sarajevo. The Government would willingly give explanations as to the opinions expressed by its agents after the crime, as soon as the Austrian Government would communicate the statements in question and show that they had really been made. "In case," it was added, "the Austrian Government should not be satisfied with this reply, the Servian Government, considering that it is to the common interest not to precipitate a solution of this question, is ready, as at all times, to accept a pacific understanding, while remitting this question to the decision either of the International Tribunal of The Hague or to the Great Powers which took part in the elaboration of the declaration which the Servian Government made on March 31st, 1909."

Germany's Duties.

On July 23rd the Russian Chargé d'Affaires in Paris telegraphed to the Minister of Foreign

Affairs in St. Petersburg: "To-day a morning newspaper publishes in a form not entirely accurate the declarations made yesterday by the German Ambassador, following them up with commentaries representing them in the light of a threat. The German Ambassador, much impressed by these revelations, paid a visit to-day to the Acting Director of the Political Department, and informed him that his words did not bear the construction put upon them. He declared that Austria had presented its Note to Servia without any precise understanding with Berlin, but that nevertheless Germany approved the point of view of Austria, and that certainly 'the arrow once shot' (these were his exact words) Germany could only be guided by its duties as an ally."

M. Sazonoff on July 26th telegraphed to the Russian Ambassador at Rome the following significant words: "Italy could play a rôle of the first importance in favour of the maintenance of peace by exercising the necessary influence on Austria and adopting an unfavourable attitude towards the conflict, for that conflict could not be localized. It is desirable that you should express the conviction that it is impossible for Russia not to come to the assistance of Servia."

On the same day that this was written the Acting Russian Consul at Prague telegraphed to St. Petersburg the news that the mobilization in Austria-Hungary had been decreed.

A number of documents follow which do not deal with matters that are not more or less

public property, although incidentally they show how strenuously Sir Edward Grey was working for peace.

Austria's Last Word.

Even so late as July 28th the Russian Ambassador at Vienna was still seeking a *modus vivendi*. In a telegram of that date to his Minister for Foreign Affairs he related how he had seen Count Berchtold, and told him in the most friendly terms how desirable it was to find a solution which, while consolidating the good relations between Austria and Russia, would give the Austrian Monarchy serious guarantees with regard to its future relations with Servia. Count Berchtold replied that he was perfectly aware of the gravity of the situation and of the advantages of a frank explanation with the Cabinet of St. Petersburg. On the other hand, he declared that the Austrian Government, which had taken energetic measures against Servia much against the grain, could no longer back out or submit to discussion any of the terms of the Austrian Note. Count Berchtold added that the crisis had become so acute, and public opinion had become so excited, that the Government could not consent to do this even if it would, the more so as the Servian reply afforded proof of a want of sincerity in its promises for the future.

Deceptive Representations.

On July 29th the Russian Ambassador in France sent to his Government a telegram saying:

"Germany declares that it is necessary to exercise a moderating influence at St. Petersburg. This sophistry has been refuted at Paris, as at London. At Paris Baron de Schoen has in vain tried to get France to join with Germany in pressing on Russia the necessity of maintaining peace. The same attempts have been made at London. In both capitals the reply was that such action ought to be taken at Vienna, because the excessive demands of Austria, her refusal to discuss the slight reserves made by Servia, and her declaration of war against that country threatened to provoke a general war."

On July 30th the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs made to the German Ambassador in St. Petersburg the following declaration, urging that it should be transmitted without delay to Berlin: "If Austria, recognizing that the Austro-Servian question has assumed the character of a European question, declares itself ready to eliminate from its ultimatum the points directed against the sovereign rights of Servia, Russia undertakes to cease her military preparations."

Summing up the Position.

Communiqué from the Minister of Foreign Affairs concerning the events of the last few days.

August 2nd, 1914.

A statement distorting the events of recent days having appeared in the foreign Press, the Minister of Foreign Affairs holds it to be his duty to publish the following *aperçu* respecting

the diplomatic negociations that have taken place during the period above mentioned.

On July 23rd the Austro-Hungarian Minister at Belgrade presented to the Servian Minister-President a Note in which the Servian Government was accused of having favoured the pan-Servian movement which had resulted in the assassination of the Heir to the Austro-Hungarian Throne. Consequently Austria-Hungary demanded of the Servian Government that it should not alone formally (*sous une forme solennelle*) condemn the aforementioned propaganda, but further, under the control of Austria-Hungary, should take sundry measures with the object of bringing to light the plot, punishing those Servian subjects who had taken part in it, and ensuring in the future the prevention of any such outrage within the Kingdom. The Servian Government was allowed a period of forty-eight hours in which to reply to this Note.

The Imperial Government, to whom the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador at St. Petersburg had communicated the text of the Note seventeen hours after it had been sent to Belgrade, having taken cognizance of the demands therein contained, was forced to recognize that some of them were fundamentally impossible of execution, while others were presented in a form incompatible with the dignity of an independent State. Holding as inadmissible the lowering of Servia's dignity involved in these demands, also the inclination of Austria-Hun-

gary to ensure its preponderance in the Balkans displayed in these same requirements, the Russian Government pointed out in the most friendly manner to Austria-Hungary the desirability of submitting the points contained in the Austro-Hungarian Note to fresh examination. The Austro-Hungarian Government did not think it possible to consent to any discussion respecting the Note. The pacific action of the other Powers at Vienna met with a like non-success.

Servia's Readiness to Give Satisfaction.

Despite the fact that Servia had denounced the crime and had shown herself ready to give satisfaction to Austria to an extent exceeding that foreseen not only by Russia but also by the other Powers, the Austro-Hungarian Minister at Belgrade considered the Servian reply insufficient and left that city.

Recognizing the exaggerated nature of the demands presented by Austria, Russia had already declared that it would be impossible for her to remain indifferent, but at the same time without refusing to use all her efforts to discover a peaceful issue which should be acceptable to Austria and should spare its *amour propre* as a Great Power. At the same time Russia firmly declared that a peaceful solution of the question could only be admitted on a basis which should imply no diminution of the dignity of Servia as an independent State. Unfortunately all the efforts of the Imperial Government in this direction remained without effect.

Austria's Refusal of Mediation.

The Austro-Hungarian Government, after having rejected all conciliatory intervention on the part of the Powers in its dispute with Servia, proceeded to mobilize; war was officially declared against Servia, and on the following day Belgrade was bombarded. The manifesto which accompanied the declaration of war openly accuses Servia of having prepared and carried out the crime of Sarajevo. This accusation, involving as it does an entire people and a whole State in a crime against the common law, by its evident inanity served to enlist on behalf of Servia the broad sympathies of Europe.

Russia's Mobilization.

In consequence of this method of action by the Austro-Hungarian Government, despite Russia's declaration that she would not remain indifferent to Servia's fate, the Imperial Government deemed it necessary to order the mobilization of the military circumscriptions of Kieff, Odessa, Moscow, and Kazan. This decision was necessary because since the date of the sending of the Austro-Hungarian Note to the Servian Government and Russia's first intervention five days had elapsed; nevertheless, the Viennese Cabinet had taken no steps to meet our pacific efforts. On the contrary, the mobilization of half the Austro-Hungarian Army had been decreed.

The German Government was informed of the measures taken by Russia; it was at the same time explained that these measures were simply

the consequence of Austria's arming and were in no way directed against Germany. The Imperial Government declared that Russia was ready to continue the *pourparlers* with a view to a pacific solution of the dispute, either by means of direct negociations with the Viennese Cabinet, or, in accordance with the proposals of Great Britain, by a conference of the four Great Powers not directly interested, namely, England, France, Germany, and Italy.

This effort on the part of Russia also failed. Austria-Hungary declined a further exchange of views with us, and the Viennese Cabinet renounced participation in the projected conference of the Powers.

Russia's Efforts for Peace.

Russia nevertheless did not cease her efforts in favour of peace. Replying to the German Ambassador's question, on what conditions we would suspend our warlike preparations, the Minister of Foreign Affairs said the conditions were that Austria-Hungary should recognize that the dispute with Servia had become a European question, and that Austria-Hungary should not insist on demands incompatible with the sovereign rights of Servia. Russia's proposition was judged by Germany to be unacceptable on the part of Austria-Hungary, and simultaneously St. Petersburg received news of the proclamation of a general mobilization in Austria-Hungary. Meanwhile hostilities on Servian territory continued, and there was a renewed bombardment of Belgrade.

The non-success of our pacific proposals obliged us to increase our military precautions. The

Cabinet of Berlin having addressed to us a question on the subject, the reply was made that Russia was forced to begin arming in order to be prepared against all eventualities. While taking these precautions Russia continued to seek to the utmost of her ability for an issue out of the situation, and declared herself ready to accept any solution consistent with the conditions she had already laid down.

In spite of this conciliatory communication the German Government, on July 31st, addressed to the Russian Government, a demand that they should suspend their military measures by midday on August 1st. At the same time the German Government threatened that if Russia did not comply they would order a general mobilization. On August 1st the German Ambassador, in the name of his Government, transmitted a declaration of war to the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Telegram to Russian Ambassadors.

On August 2nd the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs sent the following telegram to the representatives of his country abroad :

" It is quite clear that Germany is trying to throw upon us the responsibility for the rupture. Our mobilization is due to the enormous responsibility that we should have assumed if we had not taken all precautions at a time when Austria, confining her negociations to dilatory *pourparlers*, was bombarding Belgrade and carrying out a general mobilization. His Majesty the Emperor had given his word to the German Emperor not to undertake any aggressive act as long as the discussions with Austria should last. After such a guarantee and all the proofs which

Russia had given of her love of peace, Germany had no right to doubt our declaration that we would accept with joy any peaceful issue compatible with the dignity and independence of Servia. Any other course, while completely incompatible with our own dignity, would have shaken the European equilibrium and assured the hegemony of Germany. The European, even world-wide, character of the conflict is infinitely more important than the pretext on which it has been commenced. By her declaration of war against us while negociations were going on between the Powers, Germany has assumed a heavy responsibility."

Austria's Declaration of War.

The Austro-Hungarian Ambassador at St. Petersburg remitted to the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs the subjoined note at six o'clock on the evening of August 6th :

" By order of his Government, the undersigned Ambassador of Austria-Hungary has the honour to notify to his Excellency as follows : Considering the menacing attitude of Russia in relation to the conflict between the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and Servia, and in view of the fact that as a result of this conflict Russia, after a communication from the Cabinet of Berlin, has thought right to begin hostilities against Germany, which consequently finds itself in a state of war with Russia, Austria-Hungary, from the present moment considers herself equally in a state of war with Russia."

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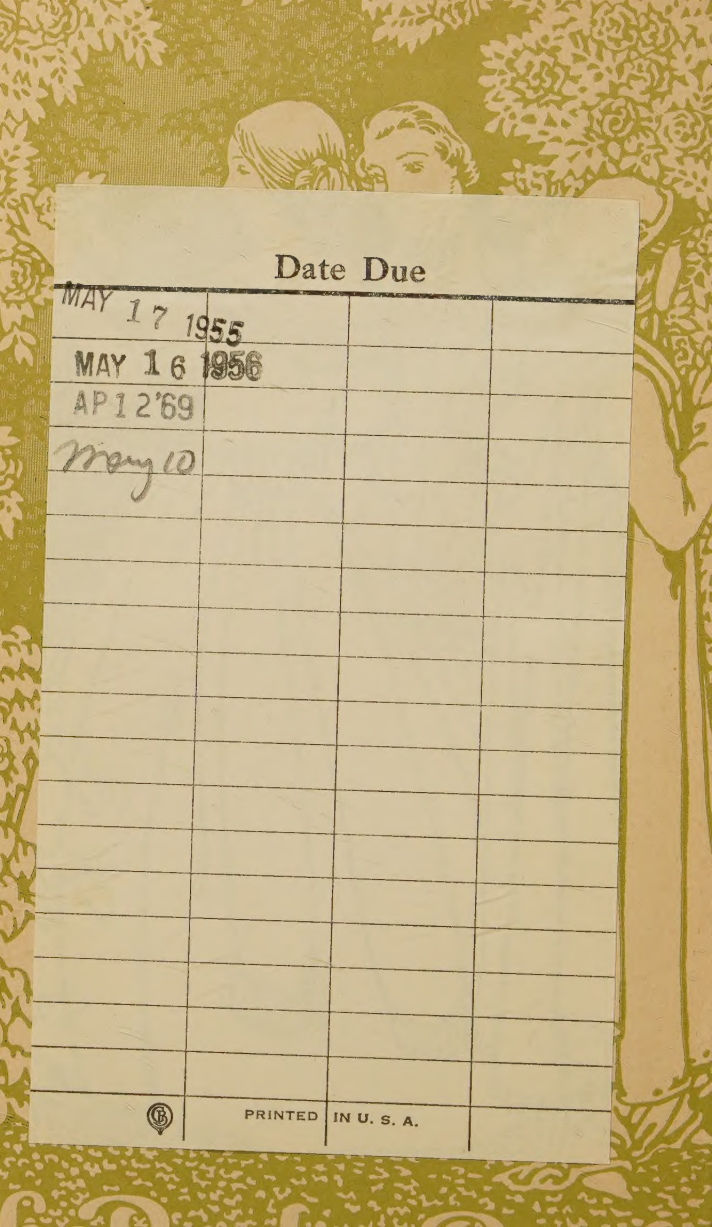

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